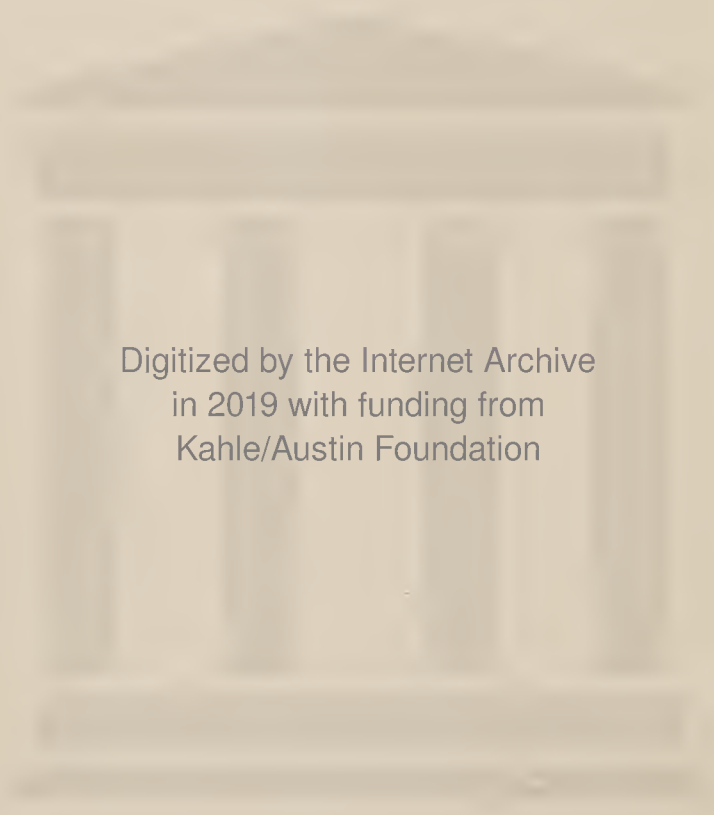


Conrad Kinnoushi

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The Diary of Nelly Ptaschkina



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The Diary of Nelly
Ptaschkina *Translated*
by Pauline de Chary



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AS a Memorial to my daughter I have decided to publish this Diary. It is her own work, and I bequeath the thoughts and experiences of my little girl to all those who appreciate the tender unfolding of a soul.

F. PTASCHKINA.

I LOVE to stand at the edge of an abyss, at the very edge so that a single movement,—and . . .

To-day, stepping close to the brink of a precipice although not so deep as I should have wished, the thought came into my mind that some day I should die thus, crashing headlong into the chasm. . . . (From the Diary).

October 20th, 1918.

Foreword

ON July 2, 1920, in Chamounix, at the foot of Mont Blanc, a young Russian girl met a tragic death. Having climbed to a steep place overlooking the Cascade du Dard, she by chance stepped on to some moss, under which there were no stones, and from an enormous height was precipitated into the torrent. . . .

The body of the girl was washed ashore much further down by the waters of the mountain stream. . . . She was buried in the Cimetière Montparnasse in Paris.

Her name was Nelly Lvovna Ptashkina. She had completed her seventeenth year a month before. Five days before her death she passed her Baccalauréat examination at the Paris Sorbonne. She died on the threshold of youth.

Her fate, in a revolutionary epoch, is that of hundreds of others. Like many Russian children she was torn away from the place of her birth after the fatal days of 1917. Thousands of children had to learn what it meant to flee from one's town, to wander through strange lodgings, to face the brutal searchings of the police, the threats of shooting, pillage by Red and White armies, bombardments, pogroms, the Cheka (Extraordinary Commission), the leading forth of friends and relations to execution, life among strangers, the death of near ones who were unable to endure the horror of living—and much, much more. No—not

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thousands, but tens of thousands of Russian children have lived through these things, but few of them—and those only in days to come—will record their impressions in writing.

Nelly Ptaschkina has told all this in her diary, in which every evening she wrote down her thoughts and the events that happened in her environment. Five exercise-books of her diary, from the time of her childhood (10-14), were left in Moscow. Two, written during the time of her flight through Russia, are published here. In them are accounts of her life in Moscow (January-April, 1918) and in Kieff (May 1918-October, 1919), and the journey from Kieff to Paris in 1919-1920.

I have studied the MS. of Nelly's diary which her mother confided to me. All that is here published belongs, word for word, without additions or changes, to Nelly. There are only a few excisions of passages concerning the private life of near relations.

In this diary we have the record of the life of a family harassed by the Bolshevists, and the life of this young girl during the time of the Revolution. The interest of the diary lies in the fact that it is a true human document of our extraordinary days. It has, however, a further interest, in that it bears the stamp of a remarkable mind. This youthful heart burned with love for Russia, her great and unhappy mother-country. She wanted to devote her life to the service of her nation, and rise above the sufferings of her family and her class.

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. . . She dreamed of becoming a writer, without realizing that she already was one, that with her diary she had won a place in Russian literature.

Yet as early as October, 1918, a sudden presentiment of her coming death, of her fatal fall into the abyss, shot through her mind. And still more keen, still more vivid became her desire to live, that she might see the "rainbow of the storm which was sweeping over Russia."

SERGEI SVATIKOFF

Translator's Note

It is an unusual departure for a translator to write a foreword to the book he or she has translated, and I must doubly apologize for venturing on such a course, as my name is obscure and a mere cypher to the British public.

If I take the liberty of claiming its attention for a few moments, it is for no merit of my own. But living for months past in close communion with the spirit of the dead child which breathes in these pages, it seems to me that if I can transcribe its message, however inadequately, it may perhaps help this little book to find its way to the hearts of the English people.

We do not claim greatness for it—only for that young soul, which God called unto Him after its brief journey here below. She has recorded here her thoughts, her impressions, joys, sorrows, hopes and she did this as simply, as unconsciously as a bird that warbles forth its liquid notes. . . . Much that she says is immature and childish, much beautiful and profound, far beyond her years. . . .

During her lifetime she guarded the secret of her Diary so preciously that not even her "Dearest," her beloved "Mummie," was accorded a glimpse into its mysteries. To-day, Death which snatched her from our midst, yet, as a tardy reparation, has bequeathed to us these pages. They are all that is left of little Nelly, blithe, enthusiastic, sad,

Translator's Note

hopeful, despondent in turn—through it all brave, and big, and full of great ideals. . . .

It is thus that we wish to remember her, and though we sorrow to think of so much bright promise crushed in its bud, yet we dare not mourn. For is it not of her and such as her that these lines were written :

Whom the Gods love die young.

THE TRANSLATOR

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CHAPTER I

Moscow, January—March, 1918

13TH JANUARY, 1918. I should very much like this part of my diary to show my spiritual growth, to be different from what I have written before.

14TH JANUARY. I went yesterday to the Artistic Theatre to see the "Cherry Orchard." Perhaps you are expecting to hear from me the usual words of admiration, increased tenfold by the strong impressions produced by this play. You are mistaken, you will not hear them. This, of course, does not mean that I remained indifferent, far from it. I took a deep delight in the wonderful scenery and the wonderful acting. . . . I do dislike going to the provincial theatres. I should not mind Kieff, for the actors there are generally good . . . but our Saratoff theatre !

At the end of the first act, I was terribly afraid that there would be applause. This clapping desecrates all that is noble and beautiful in what we have just been seeing, it turns a marvellously artistic performance into something vulgar and commonplace.

It was splendid ! The scenery was grateful to the eye and, to a large extent, helped to create a perfect setting. I only regret that when I went for the first time I did not see a stronger play than

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"The Cherry Orchard," for then the impression would have been more overwhelming and emotional. In this case the impression was created rather by clever stage craft than by the play. But, on the whole, I am very pleased with it. Now I realize that I owed my enjoyment at Saratoff to the play itself. I was not competent at that time to judge the acting, and its poor quality could not lessen the effect produced on me. Also there was no question of good scenery. . . . Oh ! I still expect a great deal from the Artistic Theatre.

I think that the play impressed me less because I had read it beforehand. For this reason I had no need to take out my handkerchief, like many around me, at the end of the scene with Firs. . . . Oh ! this marvellous scene ! The handkerchiefs amused me intensely. It seems to me, however, that it is better to see a play FIRST and then read it.

I love Sasha's sentence when she tells Petia that he is so bold in his decisions only because he has not paid their price in suffering. It sounds so true.

I have really no time to speak about the characters. When I read "The Cherry Orchard" I came to the conclusion that I was too young to understand. But, as a matter of fact, there is nothing in particular to understand. There are no ideas, only types and some pretty pictures taken from the life of an effete aristocracy. It is good on the whole, but I am expecting more from Tchekhov.

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The Artistic Theatre as a building pleased me immensely. It is extremely comfortable, beautiful and simple, what I call elegant ; beauty and simplicity combined.

15TH JANUARY. I already mentioned that when an idea, which demands an explanation or a solution, comes to me, it keeps burrowing until I have satisfactorily disposed of it. Of course it may be a good thing, but the feeling that accompanies it is none too agreeable ; as soon as you begin doing something that little idea keeps cropping up. But, nevertheless, I am rather glad to possess this capacity for concentration.

It has come into my mind that I have a kind of dual nature. It is pleasant, for I have a little of everything, but it is also annoying because I cannot define what I really am. . . . I think it is because there is one part of me which soars high up among the clouds, and another which clings very much to the earth. To put it simply : there are in my nature materialism, idealism and romanticism. . . . This is what I call a dual nature.

When I go to the theatre or feel stirred up by any other cause, all my reasoning, my criticism, my hair-splitting suddenly become remote, barren and superfluous. Life seems full : and then I drift into another world, full of sweetness and beauty, that does not belong to our sphere. It holds enchantment—the clear beauty of the summer's day with its flowers in bloom and its azure sky,

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and, wonder of wonders, all is tender and lovely there !

In this respect, there is a difference between Mummie and myself. She belongs much more than I do to that azure realm. Yes, I should hate to lose it. But when I live on this earthly planet, everything is reversed : here are the books, the cautious, reserved thoughts, the doubts. . . . There is not a shadow of that other Nelly, pure, sensitive, lofty-minded. Down here she thinks and thinks, planning a reasonable, serious life, but the light that shines from that other world irradiates her thoughts and fancies. To those azure realms she owes her simplicity of outlook, the rectitude of her disposition and her loyalty towards her comrades. Brain and heart go to make the soul. It is good that I should have both. . . .

Now, this duality of mine subdivides itself into innumerable small interests and desires. Yes, I have everything, nearly everything. I should like to remain many-sided and to go on belonging to both my worlds, so that the one may not thrust out the other. It would be dreadful if the whole of me were to be cast into one mould, but I hope that this will never happen. There are all kinds of things in me, and it is very difficult to know the whole of Nelly.

18TH JANUARY. I did not write because I was finishing *Anna Karenina*. I like this book very

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much, but feel that I have read it too soon. It isn't as if I only read it for the sake of the plot—this is not my way ; but Anna is not intelligible to me through my heart, only through my brain. Whilst I was reading, I felt overwrought. All day long, the thoughts produced by this book, dealing partly with questions of general interest, partly with the book itself, pursued me and gave me no peace. I was terribly tired and had to force myself to think about other things, to forget myself for a while. This is what makes me think that I have read it too soon.

And yesterday when it was finished, I felt relieved and can now read *War and Peace* with a clear mind.

Anna Karenina has rendered me good service in two respects. In the first place it has shown me that “fallen” women do not always deserve the contempt in which formerly I held them. No, one should find out first why they have fallen.

The book has intensified the change of outlook which I have experienced of late.

In the second place, Levin gave me the key to many questions and doubts. I saw clearly that it is impossible to live through the mind alone.

This has not solved all my problems, because all of them do not deal with the mind and the heart, but it has considerably simplified them. All the same, I am not going to analyse them at present : I might make mistakes, and it is difficult to fight against oneself and one's own convictions.

There is a slow process which develops within us

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when all our truths, all our beliefs lie in the dust, and new ones rise up in their stead. It is a painful disillusionment which we experience in our own selves. Therefore it is better to avoid it by trying at once to believe in the right things. On the other hand, it is helpful to feel that we are capable of reconsidering our beliefs through our experience. Unpleasant though it is to realize that our old beliefs were incorrect, yet we feel the satisfaction of acquiring new ones. The worst, however, is that I have no strength for such a struggle. Nevertheless, I am glad I have read *Anna Karenina*; it might be more satisfactory to grasp at once the full meaning of the author, yet had I done so I should not have arrived at my two conclusions. And they are so important to me, that I am willing to sacrifice this gratification, and simply accept them.

Towards evening. About what must I write? Properly speaking nothing very urgent. There is much that is waiting for utterance. But, never mind; it is nice to write whatever one likes, as I am writing only for myself. . . .

We have moved to Aunt Emma's and we shall stay here until Father arrives from Petrograd, and then we shall go to Saratoff, and afterwards to Kieff. How I wish we could settle down, and I could begin to live my own life! . . . And Father hasn't left yet and no one knows when he will leave, though he is preparing to do so from day to day; but in what way do his preparations

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help, when he is in no hurry? I am still very far from a normal existence.

I wish to note the present prices, just for curiosity. Firstly, everything is bought wholesale ;—*Stores* Bread, 2 roubles¹ a lb. ; flour, 130 roubles,² the white, and 95–100 roubles³ the black ; meat, 4 roubles⁴ the lb. True, these are the Moscow profiteering prices, it is cheaper when you buy with cards, but all the same. . . . The light goloshes worn by the soldiers, 40 roubles in the shop ; boots, without cards, 175 roubles, etc. There is no fruit to be had under five roubles, and at that price you can only get tiny Crimean apples, and everything else is on the same lines. It is dreadful to think that things have come to such a pass, and one is afraid of what is still ahead. . . .

A separate peace is being prepared : it is a shameful peace, thanks to which we shall lose Poland and the Baltic Provinces, with the ports which are our outlets towards Europe.

We shall be shut in in the interior of the country. Civil war, hunger and separation of one part of Russia from the other. It is a horror. It is a horror.

However, I only feel this horror when I listen to the talk of older people, or when I try to look at it as a whole ; but there are no terrible pictures before my eyes. I see, of course, that life is hard, very hard in Moscow : but in spite of that we live, we

¹ 4s.

² £13.

³ £10.

⁴ 8s.

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eat, we go to the theatre. All this prevents one from forming pictures of the whole. One gets the impression that this horror is somewhere very far off, and that we have soon got used to it, and do not really see how terrible it is. It is just because I am unable to take a general view that I feel I still look at things in a childish way, and not with sufficient understanding. I am sorry that I am not a few years older.

Under the influence of the events which are taking place, my views on history are changing, or rather they are becoming clearer. Formerly, when I read or learned about some incident I could only visualize a general picture, i.e., only the one presented to me by the book. The life of individuals merged into that of the nation, that is the individuals lived the life of their country. Now, however, I understand that my former conception represents merely the view of the historian, who shows the connection between the different events ; but that the full picture of that epoch must be totally different. I realize that during the French Revolution there were still people who lived as we live, independently of what was happening around them, and thus it was during the interregnum, in a word always. . . .

To put it differently, I have formed a fresh point of view with regard to the life of private individuals in history.

I hope that, when we arrive in Kieff, Ira's confinement will be over. How strange it is to write

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this ! I have read, for the first time, a description of Kitty Stcherbazki's confinement, and it frightened me, it is better we shouldn't be there, but on the whole I should prefer to be present. If only all goes well. It would be too bad if Ira, so young and only just beginning to live her own life, should have to go.

No, not that ! If only we could die of old age alone, and surely some day all illnesses will become curable or entirely disappear. . . . I don't like small babies until they are one-and-a-half or two years old, and for this reason I do not want to get to Kieff for two or three years.

Haven't I written enough for one day ? I should think so. But there is something I wish to add about my incredible foolishness. I cannot forgive myself for dreaming last year so much about a "friend." It's too bad ! And how naïve !

And my second failing is that I always use such high-flown words. Some time ago I wrote about "forging" my opinions. It just sounds beautiful, but there is no sense in it. You cannot forge opinions. . . .

Lately I have sometimes *felt* extremely irritable. Some nonsensical word will drive me nearly mad and I have to restrain myself from crying out aloud, as if I were possessed by the devil. And during such a spell, words which I simply would not have noticed at one time, cut me to the quick like a false note that jars on the ear of a musician. At such moments I become specially irritable and cannot

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bear to be called "Liuschka," or to be told, like a small child, in a condescending manner by what street we are going, etc. . . . I get angry, my eyes fill with tears, and I work myself up into a dreadful state of mind.

Possibly these words are not in the least exasperating, but, at any rate, they have never irritated me as they do now. I do not know how to explain this. Is it perhaps because of our abnormal mode of life? Or owing to something else? Generally speaking, I no longer feel the same unquestioning submission towards Mummie; I argue, differ from her. During my bad times Mummie leaves me alone, but there are many things that, coming from her, hurt me. There are no people without defects—no one is faultless—but all the same my "Dearest" is a treasure!

We had tea some time ago and I am still writing and writing and could write still longer, so much is there I want to say, but . . . assez!

22ND JANUARY. To-day I shall speak about the same thing, not because I have not yet discussed the subject, but because it has become a daily recurrence, or nearly so, for I strenuously try to get rid of it.

I cannot divest myself of the harassing, unsolved thought about generalities. It is very, very difficult to express, but I shall do my best to explain it to my diary and to myself.

I have said that the general order of things has

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become clearer to me, perhaps at that time (when I thought less about it) it was so, but now it has become so vague, so shadowy that I am losing my bearings.

Here I sit writing . . . and suddenly I think ; what is all this ? my interest, my life, my aims in comparison . . . with our earth, as a planet ; with all this world, which is called the solar system ; and even more so in comparison with that immense, abstract, unknown world which surrounds us—that light transparent atmosphere which recedes far, far into the unknown ; with all, all that encompasses us, that we, men, did not create but found already waiting for us ? What am I before these all-embracing, vast, incalculable spaces of nature ? . . . What in comparison to them are my life, my ambitions, to which I devote myself so fervently and attach so much importance ? What are they ? . . . A grain of sand, a speck of dust, despicable, helpless. . . .

This uncertainty, even more, the conviction of one's nothingness in the general movement of something towards some unknown aim oppresses, crushes me ; and directly I remember it in the middle of my occupations I am prevented from yielding myself up to them with all my heart and soul.

To what purpose, think I ? Why aspire to something ? What will it give me ? What will it add to our existence ? Knowledge. But all the knowledge in the world cannot bring that immeasurable

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world, which opens up before me, closer to our understanding.

I stooped to pick up a book, and in doing so have lost the thread of my thoughts. Clearness is gone and there only remains in its stead the former confused feeling of discontent, the feeling that there is something else in our lives that eludes us. . . .

23RD JANUARY. To-day I no longer feel this. The futility of our human interests and the boundlessness of the eternity of some huge world seem gone.

I tried to think about this, to recall this sensation, but without success,

In my opinion, it is lucky for people that my thoughts of yesterday but seldom come to them, and in any case they are not likely to have them always. These thoughts prevent us from devoting ourselves fully to the tasks which life imposes upon us.

But to-day I seem to lack something. I do not rightly know what : these thoughts, or this consciousness. It seems to me as though there were an emptiness within me. The realization of my loss can well be compared to blindness.

A man, blind from birth, is surrounded by all kinds of ugly and repulsive things, but cannot see them. He senses that they surround him, knows they are there, but cannot realize their ugliness. Then suddenly, only for a few moments sight is granted to him, and he sees the real world around

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him. . . . He cannot forget the horror of what he has beheld, but, determined to disbelieve in what he had only seen once, he resolves to ignore the squalor of it ; but, while he gropes his way hither and thither, he no longer enjoys his former calm.

But it is useless to argue about such dead matter, when living work is in store for me. However, if there is predisposition, that means there is a part of oneself—a part of one's reflections—which is not dependent on one's mind. . . . What an interesting being is man !

How many conventions there are, even in our language. One says for instance—and I say it as well, “to feel with one's heart.” But what is the heart ? A part of the body which is incapable of feeling. What is it then that feels ? Probably, the head, the brains. Therefore the human body is not composed of matter alone. This is what I want to know. But later, later. . . .

While I was writing about the heart and the conventions of language, a little thought escaped from that secret little box which is somewhere at the back of my mind ; but I am still vague about it. What makes me write a diary ? What makes me learn, read, etc. ? What, in fact, makes me do anything ?

What is my diary ? It is a record of my thoughts and feelings. It was the wish to write them down that gave me the idea of this diary ; and this same wish came to me under the influence of Marie

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Baschkirtsev and Raya.¹ It is curious to note that generally speaking they are young people who write diaries, because their inability to concentrate on themselves, the strength of their sensations, their confidence in the beliefs, which they have not yet lost, make them seek an outlet for their emotions. The old, although they may receive vivid impressions, probably regard them in a colder way than we young people, who are only entering upon life. Youth does not know how to concentrate, and, on the other hand, does not want to confide in others. Hence the diary. The old work out everything in themselves.

25TH JANUARY. To-day, as yesterday, all my thoughts and doubts are far from me. I cannot find a trace of them, but probably in time they will return once more. My life here runs evenly and calmly along the ordained path.

I love to meet new people, to live with them for a while ; in this way I get so many thoughts and impressions ; and contact with them teaches me to know myself better. That is why I like to live in Kieff.

I am very fond of my relations there, and feel very happy with them ; and life in Kieff is attractive because I meet so many fresh and interesting people, who are not quite strangers to me.

I do not know at all what form our life is going to take now. There is nothing pleasant in view.

¹ N.B.—A friend.

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Apart from uncertain conjectures with regard to the future, our situation is made worse by the fact that, so far, there is no railway between Moscow and Kieff, and an extremely unsatisfactory connection between Moscow and Saratoff. On the line Ryazan-Ural only one third and one fourth class carriage, beside the trucks, are running, but these are terribly overcrowded, so that through the absence of the first and second class, the journey becomes a nightmare.

One of these days Father will return from Petrograd and perhaps we shall be able to come to some decision. The situation in Ukraine may be clearer by then ; the Bolsheviks or the Gaidamaki will have got the upper hand, and we shall be able to go to Kieff. . . . Afterwards . . . *nous verrons* . . . or, as I always say to Yura, "let afterwards take care of itself."

The situation is really *terrible* ! The decisive days for Russia are at hand, "to be or not to be." My vision is too restricted to be able to picture the whole situation clearly. My home life shelters me and I see reality as something, very, very distant. . . . I am mentally short-sighted because, after all, I am but a child : this is the first and most important reason, if not the only one. All the same, at odd moments, I clearly realize the full horror of the position in which our country is placed.

Nevertheless, there have been such cases in history, and countries have passed safely through similar crises. What I ask myself is this : shall

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we weather the storm, will *our* lives be spared? As for the masses, I am sure that the country will eventually emerge from this dark and tortuous labyrinth in some way or other. But how will it all end? In what way? Many build up the wildest theories and the majority think that there will come a period of reaction with a "white general"; but who can tell?

It seems strange to look upon our lives, not as upon an isolated whole, but as a sort of link, in a very, very long chain of history, which has been dragging along for countless ages, stretching far into the unknown and shadowy past. When I look at it in this way, it gives me an extraordinarily queer sensation.

I look back. . . . I see the year 1812, about which I am reading just now, I see the interregnum of 1600, the confusion of which recalls our present times. I see the revolution of 1917 in Russia. And there in the misty distance, I know that the years are waiting. . . . And. . . . I look around me. Well, what of it? It just happens that I am living in one of these periods, an eye-witness of its events.

This is what seems strange to me. But I proceed. . . .

During these historical upheavals, before our times, there also lived people, little girls like I am, who thought about themselves as I do; people lived their own lives, independently from what went on around them. . . .

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That means? . . . That means that even the years long gone by are not dead: they are not only historical sections but they are *life*, only life that has passed beyond recall. . . . Life . . . do you hear? The wars of Napoleon, the reforms of Peter the Great—Life!

How clearly I see it all. It is not the slightest effort to me to imagine that I live in those times, because I know exactly what it means to pass through an era of social revolution.

Therefore between myself and those who existed under Napoleon and Peter the Great there is the one difference that they witnessed one historical event, and I, the other. . . . How strange . . . upheavals . . . and I! Side by side! Strange.

. . . .
I try to imagine that I am studying our epoch as I am studying everything else, and suddenly I think "but I lived then, when all this was happening." . . .

* * * *

With what interest and pleasure I have been writing, and that, because I wrote and felt at the same time. This is what attracts me most in a diary. I am frightfully interested in such an historical survey and it appeals to me immensely.

26TH JANUARY. Papa arrived last night from Petrograd. He did not bring any political news, but much that was of great interest to our family. His transference to Moscow can be regarded as

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definite. There is only one drawback : the Bolsheviks are likely to take over the Insurance Companies at any time. The directors have decided in that case to sit tight and continue working.

The Bolsheviks, according to the newspapers, have taken or nearly taken Kieff. Therefore there is hope that in a week or so communication with Kieff will be restored and then. . . .

How tired I am of this abnormal existence ! Now only one thing remains : to wait and wait. To wait for what ? For the arrival of G. or something else ? But for the moment one must wait until Father has arranged his money affairs ; after that, we shall undertake something. To tell the truth, I am reconciled to this aimless kind of life. There is nothing else left, and it is better than to suffer.

This is my plan with regard to my studies : the schools will close soon, moreover they have missed out a lot because of what has been happening, and one always learns more at home. Even supposing I only take up lessons in a month's time, it seems to me that if I work hard and diligently I shall be able to enter the gymnasium¹ in the autumn. In comparison with what is going on now my pre-occupations concerning my studies may seem trivial and absurd, but I do not feel that it is so.

Whatever turn events may take, whatever may happen in Russia, nothing can stop the march of time. The years will pass, I shall grow up and

¹ High School.

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enter life. What do I need then? Education and knowledge.

Whatever I neglect now I shall have to pay for later. What I mean by this is that my studies represent to me my very life, the greatest part of my interests, and that is why I am so anxious about their fate.

And after all my ego stands in the first place : events and all the rest only occupy the background. My own life obscures them.

I have not succeeded in isolating myself with my diary here,¹ as in Saratoff. Father has remarked upon the fact that every day I "sit down in a quiet corner and write."

Once at tea he said that he had noticed this and asked me whether I was not writing a diary. Something seemed to snap in me, and I think that I blushed like a ripe cherry. I did so dislike having to give away my secret. "No," I answered with decision, but alas, too late. My red face told a tale. "Well, and what about it?" Father continued with a tinge of irony. "Don't worry her, she is writing an essay," said Mummie, taking my part. It became worse every minute. For from my looks it was easy to guess that Father had been right in his surmise.

I covered my flushing face with my hands. All of them, auntie, uncle, Father and Mother looked smilingly at me. . . .

¹ Moscow.

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Ah, wonderful page ! 27-1-18 (added later in Nelly's handwriting).

At this moment I was like an unreasonable child, who naïvely persists in defending herself and denying her secret, in the hope of misleading her elders.

No, the child does not even believe that she has succeeded, for she knows that her secret is discovered, but all the same she instinctively behaves in this way. I did not realize how funny I must have appeared at the moment or with what indulgence they all looked down upon me. And so I took the plunge, no matter, they all knew it, better to carry it off with a high hand. At least, I shall not lose my dignity and they will have no grounds for laughing at me.

"Yes, I write," I declared gathering up my courage, but I said it a little coldly, probably from annoyance, and taking my hands from my face, I looked into the eyes of those who were sitting there.

They gave a short laugh. To them it was only rubbish, a childish secret, which had been brought to light. They did not know the pain inflicted upon me by having to disclose the existence of my diary, my most sacred possession. . . .

For when I had to say "yes," I felt that pain. A pain such as can be experienced by a miserable slave when he has to surrender to his master what he holds most dear. The suffering of a gardener who is forced to cut a cherished bloom and give it

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to a stranger. Only then I felt how dear my diary had become to me. Yes, it is dear to me and particularly so, when, full of new and interesting impressions, I feel the necessity of writing them in this little exercise book of mine. However, the matter did not rest there.

"Do let me read it," asked uncle as a joke. And for several minutes I had to keep up a bantering conversation about that which I am only able to talk of with my nearest and dearest. These moments struck me as the worst in all this discussion about the diary. How can I explain my attitude towards my diary?

Others—I do not mean Yura, who is writing something like one, but take Raya, she does not feel the same about it. She does not show it to anybody, but lets every one know that she is keeping a diary, and does not mind. But I cannot imitate her. It hurts me to talk about it, and I do not know why.

To Raya, or usually to children of the same age—I am thinking of the more serious-minded ones—a diary is not so dear, or rather they do not appreciate its intimacy, its secrecy as much as I do, and therefore it does not matter very much to them whether other people know about it or not. But for me this privacy is very precious and that is why I guard it so carefully.

What is the source of this intimacy? It seems to me that I am more secretive than they are, and more given to introspection. Why am I secretive?

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If man is born with his personality already developed is this the result of nature, or does it come from some other circumstances? Anyhow my diary is at the same time my tender and my weak spot.

A short postscript. When they were talking about my diary yesterday it had become far easier for me to listen to them and to speak about it. That must have been because they already knew it existed.

I feel, however, that towards other people I should experience the same difficulty in revealing my secret. Is it because I began by looking at it in a different way from the others? Their way is the simpler, mine the more uplifting. I considered my diary as something sacred, which I wanted to keep safe from prying eyes. Now I know that this point of view is due to my excitable temperament.

How interesting human nature is! Not what we learn about it in our school books, but that which is hidden deep within us and gives rise to these reflections.

I think I have come to a satisfactory conclusion. Here it is :

Man is born with a mind, which is already cast in a definite mould. Education only develops it and calls out new traits. It seems to me that man at birth does not represent a lump of clay, which can be shaped at will : for instance, either he is born intelligent or he is born stupid. Goodness

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can, on the other hand, be acquired. He can be made wicked or spiteful. . . . For the present, this is as far as I can get.

If I wrote down everything that is in my mind, I should write on and on. . . .

27TH JANUARY. Isn't this strange? When the day does not bring vivid impressions I sit down to my diary without any wish to do so, or, to be more exact, with the wish which is merely the result of habit.

It is easier, on the whole, for people to record in writing the thoughts that preoccupy them than to talk about them; a diary does much to relieve a full heart. Mine, I must say, is generally more full of sorrow than of joy. . . .

29TH JANUARY. There has been a change in our political world. Nelly arrived with her husband from Saratoff and told us that the Red Guards came in the night to fetch mother and all of us. Of course under the circumstances it is not worth while to risk losing one's life, or at least one's liberty, in a futile attempt to retrieve our summer clothes.

How quickly man accustoms himself to new conditions! Our situation is not particularly cheerful, yet here we are carrying on somehow. . . .

This, however, is the most sensible thing we can do. What would become of us if we took all these trifles too much to heart? All this is of little

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account in comparison with the vital news of disorders in Kieff, which are really very sad.

The collisions between the Ukrainians and the Bolsheviks were sanguinary. - If we are to believe the papers, the Krestchatik quarter is in ruins. The best shops in the town have been looted, the mob is plundering private dwellings everywhere, peaceful citizens are shot.

Two hundred guns were said to be bombarding the town and, for all we know, may be doing so at the present moment. "The horrors of the entry into Moscow pale before what is taking place there. . . ."

But I am somewhat relieved by the thought that the papers usually exaggerate, and that this is only to give a general picture : the details cannot be as bad as all that. . . . However, when Moscow was bombarded there were both victims and damaged houses. Why should it be any better in Kieff?

At the bottom of my heart I am very, very much afraid for our family. More than that, I always feel as if something were going to happen to it. But I had the same fear with regard to Father while he was in Petrograd, and yet—nothing did happen. . . .

Not really, I cannot believe it. A warehouse belonging to some relations is in that part of the Krestchatik which has been destroyed. And Grandpapa lying so ill there ; worse still, Ira expecting her baby at any moment. What may not happen to her and the child with this bombard-

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ment going on meanwhile? What a dreadful blow it would be to them if. . . . Oh not that, not that. . . .

Truly we are going through a terrible, terrible time. Nevertheless, I should like to experience something that would live in my memory when all of this has passed, with the one condition that we are spared from disaster. . . .

It would be a good thing to collect the newspapers, but that is impossible as we move from place to place ; at least I have my diary.

I have noticed a certain peculiarity in myself ; when any one in my presence praises a child for its serious mind, its mental development, the depth of its feelings, in fact for those qualities which I value so much in myself, I do not feel at ease and am unable to look the speaker in the face. I have always the impression that this person, while praising that child, is saying indirectly to me : " You are not the only one ! There are many like you ! " I frame a reply : " I do not pretend to be the only one, I do not say I am, I do not even think so. I may not be like the majority of children but, on the other hand, I do not consider myself a phenomenon. You are reproaching me unjustly, I have never thought I was the only one. . . ." But all the time I seem to myself to be making excuses, and what need is there for them ? There it is, however, and if this feeling comes over me quite apart from my will, that means that there is a reason for it—that deep down below the surface there is

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something—I know it. “When Jupiter gets angry—Jupiter is wrong.”

What is it? To make this quite clear, I shall have to look back and explain.

At Saratoff, Raya and myself, out of the whole number of acquaintances, were the only ones who thought and felt alike. The people among whom we lived did not come up to our level, neither did the children we knew. I did not imagine that I was unique, but I felt that I stood above them.

This is the chief drawback to life in a small, provincial town, one does not mix enough with others, and judgment of oneself becomes partial. It is for this reason that I like so much to live among strangers; by watching them you learn to view yourself from a different angle. At home where you always meet the same people, that is impossible.

Oh, how glad I am that I am living in Moscow! That from the autumn I shall really feel that I am living here. But this has no connection with what I was saying.

This is very hard to confess, for it means the complete renunciation of my old beliefs, of all I held most sacred: I had the consciousness, the passionate desire, which turned into a certainty, that I was going to become famous. I have *had* it, and that is why!

At that time I wrote that I was not fully convinced of it, that I was even uncertain of my powers; but that, though it seemed to me that it must happen, I was very doubtful of myself. How I suffered!

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Time passed, my desire for fame decreased, and now it is no longer so strong as it was. How disappointed Raya would be if she could hear me, but it is as I say.

It is unpleasant to realize that the dearest, the most secret wish of one's heart, which seemed so great that it filled the whole of one's life, should fade, disappear . . . not quite . . . but . . . well !

I should be as happy as before if I could become a writer. What joy that would be.

But now this wish is no longer the same. It is simpler. Many others share the same wish. Nina¹ and the rest . . . no, it has become quite different.

I should be wildly happy if I were told that I had talent. But Nina would also be happy. Why should I feel differently from her ?

I think it is because formerly it represented the whole of my future. Now I have added to it the larger vision of working for the good of the community, political work to help the Russian nation. . . . It takes my breath away.

I do not know when this change took place : It is only now I understand that many people are as serious in mind as I am, and many better, far better, than I. May be I am richer in the possession of some things which only belong to me, my thoughts, my dreams, but how empty some are, and, after all, every one of us has something that belongs to him alone.

¹ Her Saratoff friend.

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30TH JANUARY. How do I represent to myself my future, my life? I have no definite picture. I only know that *my* life will not be as empty and devoid of purpose as that of our "ladies." But I have not yet decided what I am going to do.

It is my intention—and I think I shall be able to carry it out—to take a share in social and political work. The visions of my future life all centre round it. It seems to me that to bring enlightenment to the masses is very important, and that I shall direct some of my energies in this direction. But only a part.

So many things are of interest to me that I want to crowd all I can into my life. I do not know as yet what I shall do. Perhaps, and how wonderful that would be,—I shall write. There is one thing that I can see quite clearly in the time ahead of me, and that is a life full of activity and occupations.

My future life is the commanding feature of my dreams. I want to live, to "live" in the full sense of the word, as I understand it; live a full life, not from day to day like the majority of people. I do not know how to explain it clearly, but I cannot imagine my life running on the same lines as that of my friends and relations. To me life means movement—it is something radiant, golden. Therefore when I think about that time, when I shall "live," something melts within my soul, I am hardly able to draw breath. A wondrous feeling comes over

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me ; I am happy then, happy in the expectation of that life, of that future which is waiting for me. . . . Until now people have always spoiled me, and I have grown so used to it that if I do not meet with the same indulgence at the gymnasium I shall not feel happy. Since I was a tiny tot I took the lead in our childish games. Then I entered school and quickly ranked among the best pupils. Influenced by all this I began to hold a high opinion of myself. There were no other children who could compete with me, and therefore I found myself alone; or very nearly so, and got accustomed to playing first fiddle. That may be why, when other children are praised in my presence, I feel unaccountably ill at ease, but it seems to me that it is not quite my fault.

31ST JANUARY. It is the second day I have felt strung up and unwell. All the morning I was ready to cry, and a vague depression hung over my spirits. However, I know the remedy, so I went out for a walk.

The weather soothed me. The sun shone warmly and illumined everything, the snow was so crisp and sparkling that all my troubles and sad thoughts had to go.

At such times one stops thinking and only feels that under the influence of the caressing rays everything thaws, sorrows, tears, all that is bitter and sad ; and the heart becomes light, quite light again. . . .

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Then I returned home and picked up my diary.

It began yesterday. After dinner, when I had finished writing, a letter was received from G. containing the news that Mummie is allowed to go back to Saratoff. I was enchanted, but Father said there was no object in my going. At the moment I did not seem to mind, but could not understand why I should have felt as if something had snapped inside and completely spoilt my temper. I took refuge in that other world where there are no philosophical considerations, where one only *feels*. This mood persisted until the walk I took to-day ; when I am like that I am quite a different person from my usual self.

Two Nellys live in me. Sometimes I would like to know which is the real one. When I am in that other world, "that" Nelly seems the real one ; when I am back again in my ordinary everyday one it is "this." In fact they complete each other and make up the real me.

I hope to go to the Artistic Theatre on Friday night. With regard to theatre-going it is always the same story. It seems to me that I have no right to ask Father for money, that I ought not to do so. . . . Not so much because everything is so expensive. . . . No, I have always had that feeling . . . for a long time. . . . It was always a painful subject at home. T-va and other girls are poorer than I am, but they often go, and I cannot. I must really feel a very strong impulse to go, to bring myself to ask for a ticket. . . .

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Perhaps it is because Father often talks about money and the cost of living. Perhaps the awkwardness of asking comes from my reluctance to allow myself any relaxation at such a time. But Father's conversations are really at the root of the matter. I cannot understand why people economize. To what end? They will die some day and can only use money during their lifetime, like all the other things they are using; but money is the coarsest and most materialistic of them all. What is money?

A convention which people have created for their use. It is not valuable in itself, only when taken in conjunction with the necessities of life and with what it can obtain. Why then be so anxious to save it, and, in the eternal expectation of something, deny oneself all the comfort and pleasure that it can buy? Oh, how pitiful are the people who guard it so carefully. They are pitiful because they cannot realize what is so clear to me, and so attach such importance to its possession. Poor things!

Yesterday, when we were having tea, the question was raised whether I should accompany Mother to Saratoff. Dearest saw my miserable face and probably thought that it was on account of my being prevented from taking the journey. Perhaps, unconsciously, it was from that reason, but really I did not think this had anything to do with my low spirits. Wishing to console me and believing that she really was doing so, Dearest said that I should come with her. Father, as usual,

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sharply protested. "There you are again," I thought, "probably grudging the expense." And so it proved. But Dearest insisted, saying that I was necessary to her.

After all I begin to think I shall go. Father's words about the expenditure have cut me to the quick. I decided that if Mother really wants me I must go; Mother says she does, but in this case I must give up the theatre.

I do not know why I came to this decision. In the evening I talked to Mother and persuaded her not to buy the tickets. But how I wanted to go!

My morbid mood only increased that wish. It seemed to me that could I but get there I should be happy . . . but I fought this down and conquered.

Somewhere, however, in the depths of my heart, I trusted that Mummie would still bring the ticket to-day at dinner-time, and that I should be obliged to go; on the other hand, I wanted to be allowed to persevere in my renunciation; all the same I still hoped. . . . Mummie came—*without* the ticket!

My spirits drooped. I felt hurt, so hurt . . . then this mood passed. Did I get rid of it, or did it go by itself? But it is over, and I already look on the whole incident as closed.

I must put away my old desires, and must learn to renounce whatever I think is bad within me. This is what I tell myself.

Some one, I think it was Hertsen, said that whoever is incapable of discarding his old failings need

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not hope for a brighter future : these words sustain me in the intention to deny myself !

Evening. To-day I want to write so much that I have decided to do so now, though every one is at home.

The conversation about the theatre began all over again, for Aunt Emma, having bought some tickets, wanted to invite me. I should be so happy if I could go. And now when my depression has lifted I can no longer understand why I should not do so. It would not ruin us, it is the thought of all the fuss. . . .

I always wonder whether I should act in the same way if I were independent. Certainly not. If the money were mine I should only be accountable to myself, and could spend what I liked. But the money does not belong to me. I do not earn it and must be careful with it, as everything is so expensive. What a stupid thing money is ! Money makes me angry, because although so much despised, it is still all-powerful. Stupid people themselves have made it so.

14TH FEBRUARY. Mummie intends to send me to a mixed gymnasium, boys and girls ; they follow the programme of the boys' schools and naturally I shall have to work very hard, which thrills me.

But Dearest has spoken to a pupil of the VIIth class of this gymnasium, who told her that it will be too difficult for me to keep up with the VIth

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class, and therefore I ought only to try for the Vth. Dearest agreed with her. . . . But when I heard it I burst into bitter tears. I felt the ignominy of being two consecutive years in the same class, though I realized that this was a mistaken point of view. For the Vth class in a boys' gymnasium is equal to the VIth for girls in Saratoff; also, I shall not even lose a year as there are only seven classes here, and I can pass straight into the University without further examinations. It was that word "Fifth" which hurt my feelings.

Raya is in the VIth and I am to be in the Vth ! In my heart I had already given up this ambition, but it hurt and that was the reason I howled. I am glad that I have been able to get the better of my pride, and I rejoice at the new strength which I have discovered in myself. I like the gymnasium very much and am already looking forward to my studies. There will be boys whom I shall get to know, good "pals" with whom one can be on sensible, friendly terms. They have their different sets, and choose their own monitors to serve as a link with the school authorities. They are taught by professors, not ordinary masters. All this is excellent and I am delighted. I shall be very pleased to go there, and perhaps may be able to get into the VIth class after all. I am not afraid of work and think that I can overcome the difficulties. That would be heavenly, but I doubt if it will come off. Probably it will all end by my

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entering the Vth class. Well, no matter . . . but the gymnasium is splendid.

Do you know to what conclusion I have come? At odd moments it seems to me that I have become more indifferent towards Father. . . . After one of his absences I feel somewhat changed towards him, but as a rule I don't feel anything at all.

This thought frightened me when it first came to me ; I believe that it is better not to dwell on it, and that it should remain hidden in my heart. I know that I am generally ungracious, morose and cold to him. Until now I have forced myself to assume a different manner. . . . I used to tell myself that after all he was my father, but now I think : " what's the good of trying ? "

It is wrong, in any case, to yield to this thought, and I ought to forget it as quickly as possible and be affectionate and tender towards him, the more so as I am able to achieve this without particular effort.

Why should one be amiable? Intelligence and logic demand an explanation, but the heart does not agree with them and insists that kindness is essential. If I should try to find proofs for this, they would not satisfy me, and my heart would go on nudging my conscience. All the same I prefer to trust in it for all questions of this kind.

17TH FEBRUARY. G. has arrived. One of these days Mummie will travel with him to Saratoff. I remain here. C. A. says that there is no sense in

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my wearing myself out on the journey ; Father is against my going ; Mummie can do without me. This is delightful, isn't it ?

I feel sorry that I am not going. I shall give letters for them all. To my old class. I beg them to send me one number of our magazine to remember them by ; it is only right, having worked so much on it, I suppose they will give it. . . .

* * * * *

No, it is better not to dwell too much on what I wrote last time. Perhaps it was a mistake. Perhaps I do love Father, but not very much, and perhaps I do not. But when I stop thinking about it I am able at least to be good-tempered towards him without the slightest effort. When, however, I worry about it, the thought that I am pretending that, in reality, I have no feeling at all, torments me and I get frightened. It is easier not to think ! Afterwards, when I have regained my normal attitude of mind, I do not notice anything out of the common. And then it *seems* that all is well and one does not dig deeper. . . .

This is very hard. . . . Alas, Father is a stranger to me, quite a stranger. The older I grow, the more I notice this. He is a parent, not a father. . . .

But nevertheless Father is a good man, i.e., there is much that is good in him. And generally speaking there are no people who are completely bad. In each one there is a particle of goodness. . . . I do not like him because of his lack of understanding.

17th—18th February, 1918

But I do not *always* have this feeling. Sometimes I am sorry for him. Deeply sorry.

That is why I say that in the soul of every one of us there is something good. Then why are people so bad? Strange.

Perhaps one is always able to get at them through their better feelings. Only through these? Not always. But we must discover what is good in them. Appreciate it. Refrain from judging people. Remember the good that is in them. Whilst we judge a man we suddenly notice something good in him. How then can we judge him? And the bad remains bad all the same. What then?

Only Life can solve his riddle.

But Dearest and I understand one another.

18TH FEBRUARY. Yesterday night I went to the Artistic Theatre to see Knut Hamsun's play "In the Grip of Life."

What scenery! What acting! That third act at the Hotel! I have never experienced such rapture, such a great artistic sensation.

But the third act! It is the best. What beauty! "May it please you to enter" . . . and the negro who stands like a graven image. . . . "I have brought my whole self to you." What splendid language! Thus, during the play a storm of enthusiasm sweeps over one's soul; one forgets that this is the stage and one lives, one lives! And Katchalov's voice! In "Gorye ot Umā" he was incomparable, so they say. But what does now

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matter ! The impression was THEN, its memory is pale, and words are too poor to express it. How beautiful ! How beautiful !

The second act left me breathless, and the thought that it was merely acting and make-believe which was raising me to a seventh heaven of delight, filled my cup of joy to the brim. You understand, do you not, what this meant to me ? . . .

The third act was beyond praise. I sat all the time entranced. . . . Thoughts of my life in Moscow . . . the bliss that would often, often await me in the future. . . . It seems to me that nothing can surpass the theatre. . . .

Yesterday, during the play, I suddenly felt such an impulse to enter the school of the Artistic Theatre, that I was quite carried away by it. And why not ? Why should I not attend the theatrical school and the lectures at the University at the same time ? I know it has been done. I shall still be so young, only eighteen or nineteen. Why should I not study for a few years, provided, of course, that I am not quite hopeless at it. How I love the theatre ! I see nothing impossible in my plan, but in that case I should really work. I do not mean that I shall go on the stage ; a theatrical career, and nothing else would not satisfy me, but at eighteen my whole life lies before me and a few years spent at the theatrical school would not count much either one way or another. After that we shall see. Go on the stage ? Act as they do ? Yes, that would be happiness. But too

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little for me . . . unless something else is added to it. . . .

I should love to have an album of the Artistic Theatre. It contains all the photographs, the history of the theatre, the biographies of the artists. . . . When things are a little quieter I shall get it. At present it is impossible, but I should like at least to see it.

The future. . . . I wrote that I was dreaming about it with rapturous emotion. . . . Oh, do try to understand what I mean !

A passionate joy comes over me when I look into the distance ; there, beyond the houses, the towns, the people, all is radiant, all is full of sunshine. . . . Then it dawns upon me that my life will be different from that of the others . . . bright, interesting. . . .

I feel so happy then. If only it could come more quickly—it is still so far away.

But I am able also to look at things differently and then my gaze shifts downwards, sees more clearly, rests upon a strange picture.

Then I see young girls, such as I shall become in three or four years' time. They live, like every one else from day to day, waiting for something. They live drab, dull lives. . . . Probably they too had visions of a bright, happy future, and gazed into the golden distance. . . . But now. . . . Where is that golden distance ? Did they not reach it ? *Can* one ever reach it ? Does it exist really, or only in our dreams ?

Moscow

For, surely, I am not the only dreamer. Are they not dreamers too? Shall I live on as they do, following the pattern woven by routine on the canvas of life? Waiting for some one?

There will be nothing. . . . No, no, not that! I am frightened. Give me my golden horizon. Let me live a full life, with all the strength of my soul.

It is a long time since I wrote like this. . . . When I grow up . . . I must find out. . . . If I am able to achieve it, if there is in me only one divine spark. . . .

It seems to me just now that the wish to be able to write is so great, so strong within me . . . but, it is quiescent only because the atmosphere is not propitious.

After all, why should my life be different from that of those girls about whom I wrote? When I think of it, fear grips my heart. What will happen then? What will become of my dreams? No, they are safe, safe, because I shall not give them up to anybody. . . .

In reality about what do I dream? What do I see in the golden distance? What is that full and bright life about which I am thinking? What is it? What is it like?

I only know one thing, that it must be radiant and brimming over, clear and sunny. . . .

Just like that. . . . All children and adolescents probably think thus about their future life, it beckons to them, it holds out alluring arms. . . .

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But, as time passes, the dreams fade away, one is content with the present ; and not merely content, but quite happy, once the dreams have vanished. They live, these visionaries, like all the rest of us . . . then they die. . . . Others are born. . . . Well, that is how it goes. . . . The dreams will disappear. . . .

If all knew this as they grow up, if they all had mapped out their lives according to a preconceived plan, people would be more practical, especially women ; they would not spend their time waiting for something indefinite . . . that may come to them no one knows from whence. . . .

Ah, to live more quickly, in order to know what will become of me.

20TH FEBRUARY. Mummie left yesterday for Saratoff ; a short week and she will return with our belongings, and our letters, and we shall then go to Kieff.

I am beginning again to experience a certain emptiness, a discontent, a dissatisfaction with my life, an inability to grasp its inner meaning.

It seems to me, however, that if life is full and busy, these thoughts do not come, there is no time for them . . . much better so . . . better . . . and worse. . . .

Evening. I am greatly concerned about the question of peace and await its solution with anxiety : I do not think it will be long in coming.

There are two prospects before us : first, a

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separate peace with Germany ; secondly, a prolongation of the present state of affairs, i.e., the continuation of the German advance against very slight opposition, or, in fact, no opposition at all on our part.

It seems to me that it is superfluous to dwell on the ignominy, the baseness of what is going on. After all that Russia has done with regard to the Allies, what does a separate peace matter ? Have we taken any part in the war since the advent of the Bolshevists ? The answer is clear—"No !" According to my opinion, the separate peace will not come as a surprise to any one. And such a remarkable event must pass unnoticed, as in olden times did the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Of course, in the Allied Countries the paper sellers will call out their tidings and people will buy anxiously. No, they may be prepared, but all the same, it will be a blow to them. . . . With regard to what I said about the shame, this is what I mean.

Yes ; a separate peace is a disgrace, but it seems to me more infamous still to live under the German yoke.

This is what my intuition tells me, but I do not know whether my intellect will agree with this argument, and for this reason I want to clear it up.

Which is the better alternative in the light of international relations : to conclude a separate

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peace, or to persevere with a war, even such a pitiful one as that we are now waging? Of course the second.

Lastly, if after all that has happened, we go on with the war, will this change the attitude of our allies towards us?

For we have lost the war, and their scorn towards us will be passed on from generation to generation. Nevertheless, morally perhaps, we should not sink so low.

Do I, from a general point of view, admit the dishonour of a separate peace?

Yes. It is very shameful and I should have opposed the conclusion of a separate peace violently so long as fighting of some kind was still going on. Now it is too late to look back. What will be the use of continuing the war with the Germans? I prefer even such a peace to the unopposed conquest of Russia by Germany.

This instinctive desire terrifies me, for I realize that it is dishonourable. On the other hand, I am unable to take a different view of the situation. What worries me most is that not only is my wish dishonourable but it also coincides with the battle-cry of the Bolshevists, which every one considers revolting. I am going against public opinion, which, alas, I so greatly respect in this particular case.

Trotsky has written that a separate peace has become a necessity, thanks to the total inner disorganization.

Moscow

This is a shameless lie ; the Bolsheviks have been wanting peace all along, even at the price of concluding it separately. Why, of course, it would be better if we COULD continue the war, even such as we carried on under the Kerensky Government. Then, I was indignant at the idea of a separate peace. . . .

There is much in this that is a riddle to me, I shall have to think a great deal about it.

21ST FEBRUARY. I am now in such a peaceful, happy mood, feeling calm and joyful. I want to dream about pleasant things, for instance that I am again living in my own house, seeing my Kieff relations. . . .

In to-day's paper I read that some members of my family have been badly hit by the Bolshevik requisitions. This is serious. . . . I am most concerned about the effect on Grandfather, who is still lying so ill there.

With God's help, we shall soon be together again. If only things would improve a little !

In the autumn we are settling definitely in Moscow. Who knows what is in store for us ? From the time we left Saratoff current events have closely intermingled with the fortunes of our family ; formerly our life flowed on untouched by them, but now I can no longer separate them from what is happening to us.

Cursed Germans ! Will they not let us live in peace even in Kieff ? When will all this end ?

20th—21st February, 1918

How? The sufferings of Russia are boundless. . . . People form conjectures, but that means nothing, we know nothing. . . . If only we could get settled, begin to live. My hopes do not go beyond life in Kieff. Thank God it is drawing nearer. Mummie will arrive from Saratoff and we shall go to Kieff. We shall see what happens later. Communications with Kieff are improving; by the time we are able to leave, they may be quite satisfactory.

There is absolutely no news in to-day's papers. The Germans continue their advance. No answer yet from Berlin. Perhaps the evening papers may bring something fresh.

The people around me rejoice at the German invasion, for they are hoping for the return of order. I do not rejoice, but am deeply grieved. . . . I wrote before that I want peace, a separate peace. I want it so that I may not become a German subject; but perhaps I am making this a personal question after all. Because we can then go to Kieff? No, surely not. This is why.

I do not want a German conquest, because I do not want to live under German rule. Just that. This idea meant more to me than that of the separate peace which was far off, and therefore did not frighten, did not appal me. . . .

That was yesterday, but to-day? My strongest feeling is still that I do not want to live under the Germans. When I said this C.A. asked "Are you a patriot?" I do not know; it seemed to

Moscow

me that if to be a patriot is something exceptional—I am not ;—but as I do not imagine it is,—I probably am.

Taken in this sense a separate peace represented the nearest approach to a solution of the problem, and therefore I longed for it. But to-day ? Now ? I can only see two issues : the only two that are possible : a separate peace, or the unopposed invasion of Russia by Germany.

What do I want ? Ha, ha, that is funny ! It is just as if one asked a child : “ Shall I beat you with a birch or a willow rod ? ” I want nothing—neither the one nor the other.

Given a German advance we shall perish completely. With a separate peace ? Oh, what a disgrace ! How humiliating are the conditions imposed upon us. . . . No, to accept it is dreadful. . . . It is impossible.

Is the German invasion better ? A slow death while opposing it. Is that better ? Better, a million times. If we only had an army imbued with a proud spirit, strongly welded together in the one desire—to save the nest from the claws of the bird of prey—we could fight, there would be no choice. We should *have* to fight.

Minsk, Lutsk, Dvinsk have fallen. . . . There is hardly any opposition. . . . The Moscow Soviet is *against* a separate peace. There are rumours of a general mobilization.

I rejoiced greatly at this news, but it is already being denied. My heart is terribly heavy. How

21st—23rd February, 1918

COULD I wish for a separate peace? For I realize more and more that this is a horrible disgrace! The Bolsheviks write that however cruel this peace may be, they are forced to sign it, in order to *save the country from final ruin*. And this is what confuses me. What will happen if peace is not concluded? Victory is practically impossible. Let us assume that we struggle on, defending ourselves? We perish. All the same, we shall not have committed the greatest and last infamy; they will not be able to say that we have betrayed our allies, that we went back on our word. True, we have done many despicable things as it is, but as their Diplomats assure us, the Allies know how to differentiate between us,—the Russian Nation—and the Bolsheviks. Yes, our shame will not be so great, but we shall die. . . .

If a separate peace is concluded, we shall be dishonoured for ever for breaking faith and because of our very degradation—but we shall live. . . . Russia, although diminished, will yet exist. . . .

23RD FEBRUARY. How much I wanted to write yesterday! How I longed for my diary! But I could not write. To-day there is no one at home and therefore I can put my time to good use. When I am excited or sad nothing soothes me like my diary. If I am very happy my joy calms down, subsides whilst I write. My diary has become indispensable to me.

Moscow

Yesterday, I felt miserable and this morning I do not feel any better. . . . Afterwards, when I was playing with the children, the mood passed, and that frightful and gloomy something, which had begun to take possession of me, disappeared into space . . . probably to return to-morrow.

It always begins when I am reading the papers. You read that the Germans are coming nearer and nearer, that peace is being concluded under infamous conditions and may be signed any moment ; that to-morrow new horrors are in store for us ; horrors that cover everything with the gloom of uncertainty and dread. . . .

Yes, in these moments one sees nothing but the darkness, the terrible black abyss, without light . . . bottomless. . . .

At such moments we surrender hope ; terror and sorrow grip our soul and we want to forget everything—forget, above all, the world which has become such a nightmare. But forgetfulness does not come and darkness creeps nearer and nearer ; it envelops us more and more closely and there is no way out. . . . There is none !

Then it seems to me that I understand the innumerable martyrs, who driven by their agony of soul, preferred to have done with life rather than live on in this hell. . . .

For hell is in the soul, and also longing, desperate longing. I feel what a bird must feel which has been unexpectedly caught by a snare. The poor

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thing beats its wings from side to side, fluttering up and down, and there is no outlet. And it cannot yet come to its senses, cannot understand that there is an end to its freedom. The poor little bird dashes itself about and, vanquished by the strength of man, in its despair, its helplessness, gives in and surrenders to his will without a murmur.

Such are the people who have been unable to sustain the mad struggle against their own selves and have finished with the nightmare of life.

I do not know whether from what I have written it is possible to understand my state of mind during these moments. I suffer dreadfully, my sorrow overwhelms me and I would like to end it all.

. . . .
Yet, my anguish is not so great that I should decide on such a step. With those who perished, probably the suffering was more intense, more prolonged, perhaps continuous. . . .

Yes, it is very terrible. When reading the papers, all that is happening creeps quite close to us ; the trivial incidents of every day, which formerly stood between us and these horrors, seem to vanish and there comes in their stead something huge, which crushes us with its weight.

What is still ahead ? What is going to happen ? When will all this end . . . or is it without an end ?

Centuries will pass, we shall be dust, but our

Moscow

sorrows will be transformed into happiness for our descendants, peace will reign on the earth. Tchegov said something like it in the "Three Sisters."

How understanding suddenly comes to one, illuminating every nook and cranny, making things clear to one's consciousness. . . . What torments me at the present time? Everything that is taking place, that develops with such alarming clearness before my eyes. What tortures me is that there is the same suffering, the same nightmare before us. . . . I now understand Tolstoy when he said that only those who have not seen life are afraid of Death. . . . I look at life from a different point of view from his, but I am not afraid of death for myself. . . .

Why write about these dreadful moments? They are really horrible!

If I, who am only a child, feel like this, what must the grown-ups be feeling? Not all of them, and not always, but when such moments are upon them? Now I understand why they say that the present life is not life, that it shortens human existence, that one year counts for ten. . . . I understand! Here I sit writing, and it appears to me that there is no longer any individual life in Russia, but that there are only people crushed by terror; I remember my own deductions about individual life during great historical upheavals, and am forced to acknowledge that this panic only overwhelms certain people and only at times. . . . But I am

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so far from this all-embracing repose of mind and soul that I do not even want to write about it.

That transient, perturbed feeling is more with me just now. . . . I feel it at this moment, but not so much as I shall to-morrow morning, when I read the papers. . . . The times have taught me a great deal.

It is true after all that we suffer for our descendants. They will have a happy life, at least a quiet one. . . .

But I notice that newspapers do not affect other people as they do me ; they accept everything calmly, for to them everything is more remote. True "they" are grown up. What I want to say, however, is that from the fact that I felt calmer after playing with the children I conclude that the news affects me so strongly because I have no trivial interests, or very few of them, to stand between myself and this nightmare. . . . It produces such a strong impression on me, because our own lives are not normal, and are entirely disorganized and dependent on outside events.

Fear is added to the general agitation as well as doubts with regard to the future. I am ashamed that a mere question of personal safety should form a part of this, but nevertheless it is so.

If only Mummie would come ! At least, we should be together ; we could decide what to do later on. If we are able to settle down in Moscow, let us definitely make up our minds to do so. This question about our living in Moscow, our journey

Moscow

to Kieff, is thrown into the shade by all the rest ; nevertheless, I do wish Mummie would come. I don't know why I want this so much. I suppose when a situation is as insecure as ours, one *must* have something to look forward to in the near future as the end of that uncertainty.

Only quicker, only quicker ! Thank God, at least the telegraph with Saratoff is in good working order. . . . If only we could get a letter from her. . . .

My own life completely disappears in the midst of all this. A black and cold darkness swallows up everything. Then I feel acutely that Mummie is not here, that we want her, that the journey is difficult. . . . In a word, thoughts about her are bound up with that individual life which has vanished. It is as if Mummie were far, far away.

Everything is in total darkness except for a small circle of light around me, but Mummie is left outside it. Therefore I passionately desire that she could be here. We cling to her like an anchor, for we feel the need of such an anchor.

At such times, Kieff and our relatives who live there fade away, immersed into the general fear and disquiet about *everything* : even those nearest to us have no place in our thoughts.

Lately I have had the sensation that so far I have been blind and that now, having recovered my sight, I see all that is happening around me. And doing so for the first time, I become terrified, more terri-

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fied than those who have been able to see it all along.

To-morrow . . . what will to-morrow bring forth ?

26TH FEBRUARY. It has been decided by an insignificant majority to accept peace. The German advance continues in spite of the announcement that has been sent to them. It is rumoured that they are nearing Petrograd. The Ukrainians and the Austrians are fifty versts from Kieff. Communications with Saratoff have been re-established. . . . The newspapers, with the exception of the Bolshevist papers, do not appear until peace has been signed ; thus run the orders.

I am expecting a telegram from Kieff. If the news is correct, our people there will again have to pass through days of bloodshed. Will they weather them safely ? What is happening to them ? How good it would have been to live there, to study.

. . . .
During the last days I have recovered a steadier attitude of mind towards our position : this may be because I have a definite ray of hope lighting up my way—Mother's arrival. But once we have her here and uncertainty again holds us in its grip, I shall begin to wear myself out once more. For the moment I am all right, and even feeling quiet. The oppression has lifted. I feel that my life lies apart from the general trend of events, and this is always a sign that my mind is free from any par-

Moscow

ticular worry. Various doubts are troubling me. Looking around I somehow want to say : "how strange all of this is !" Strange that I sit and write my diary ; my surroundings seem strange. I would like to ask myself : " Why is this ? " Here as I write, giving myself up entirely to this occupation, a mysterious voice whispers : " This is not what you want ! " Do you understand ? I am unable to surrender myself entirely to what I am doing. A foolish self-consciousness holds me back. What does it say ? I do not know. It is as if part of my " ego " were looking at me sideways and wondering.

It is evident that this comes from having separated my inner life from the outside world. When one has a great deal to do there is no place for such thoughts. I dwell on my duality, my two worlds . . . but for the present, let me put aside all personal feelings and talk about the peace.

With regard to this, my feelings are divided into two distinct parts : some are egoistical and only concern my own interests ; the others concern themselves with the interests of the community at large. The first are subconscious, the others are the result of my conscious thoughts.

If I had to define which of the two is stronger, I should be unable to do so : because they are the opposite of each other.

I have already indicated my *conscious* wish and this is *not* to live under the German yoke. There are many reasons for this. The chief is that I do

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not want it because it lowers our Russian prestige.

This reason I frankly acknowledge, but there are, however, other feelings of a more personal nature which I do not confess to myself, but which I realize exist all the same. I am afraid of the Germans : I am afraid of them because I do not know them and therefore do not want them. This is what underlies my opposition, though it is not so strong as the motives I have already put forward. The Germans represent something new, unknown and terrible which I fear. That does not mean that I do not feel anything beyond this egoistical impulse. My more active, conscious side shows me the full disgrace of the German invasion and the humiliation of Russia, if Germany is going "to re-establish order" for us.

Therefore, my chief feeling is that I cannot bear the Germans. They may come with the best intentions ; we "bourgeois" might have a much better, more peaceful time if they took things in hand ; life might become more normal. And yet notwithstanding the voice of reason, which seems to tell us that with the "Soviets" we shall fare worse and worse—I feel that I *do not want* the Germans.

It is too shameful, too humiliating ; it would hurt too much to watch that process, which would be called "licking us Russians into shape."

Yes, "us." . . . This does not mean myself or those near to me ; it would mean those who consider themselves our enemies—the Bolsheviks,

Moscow

but all the same they would be Russians, *our* people, and those others,—aliens, new-comers.

It is at moments such as these that one feels whether one loves what is called one's country. And now I know that I do *love* it.

Yes, most of all I should prefer to see the Army reorganized and to witness the repulse of our external enemy. Under his menace, we should all become united and forgetting our class hatred we should struggle against him.

I admire the act of Stankevitch, who, in view of the desperate position of the country, declared that, while remaining a representative of Labour, he offered his services to the Soviet of the Commissaries. All should do likewise.

Poor Bolsheviks ! They perceived in his honest behaviour something for which they saw fit to arrest him. Poor things, they do not understand. . . .

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The Germans are advancing. Our citizens are called to arms. These proclamations breathe a spirit full of exaltation . . . if they could but infect the public with their enthusiasm !

For a time I am going to abandon criticism and will simply say what I feel. I am thankful that peace has not been signed and that we are going to fight.

Perhaps a miracle will happen and we shall conquer ? Oh, if that could be, what joy !

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If all could feel as I do, feel that they are not going to fight for the Bolsheviks, but for Russia, that they are saving her if they can but firmly hold together. No, we shall struggle on. I am happy, very happy. It is true that Kieff is again passing through a terrible time, my people there will suffer, be exposed to danger. . . .

But we must take a broader view, try to forget our family ties. What can we do? They will have to put up with it. . . . Perhaps they will fall into the hands of the Austrians, that is return to Ukraine . . . anything is possible. . . .

And yet, the thought about Kieff will darken my hopes. Not because of myself, but because of Mother. Dearest will be terribly distressed. Also the question about our journey will remain undecided; shall we, or shall we not be able to go?

In spite of this I am happy: we have not surrendered. Yet I am ashamed to take no part in what concerns us all, ashamed that I can do nothing against the enemy. Though, if they dig trenches, I shall go. But otherwise? . . . I shall not run away to the front. I have not enough courage. But what joy it would be to feel that I was useful.

Something else: is it really possible that we shall have to submit to the Germans in the end? That would hurt, hurt and offend at the same time. If that should happen I shall give up all my pleasures, the theatre and everything else. Why? If I really feel sorrow—and I know that I shall—it will be no sacrifice.

Moscow

This is only what is right and proper. Could you imagine that, while the Germans have become our masters, we could go on enjoying ourselves as usual, as if nothing had happened?

A Frenchwoman I know made a vow that she would go nowhere while the war lasted. I wondered at the time whether this was not exaggerated? I have thought about it since and now see that I understand and approve of her resolution.

However, during the entry of the Bolsheviks into Saratoff I did go to the theatre. Of course it was not the fitting time for it, but I felt that I was losing courage and wanted to keep up my spirits.

. . . . What a long time it is since I had a corner I could call my own, my dear cosy room.
. . . .

27TH FEBRUARY. There is no news from Petrograd. There are rumours that it is taken. We have not heard from either Kieff or Saratoff. Thank God, I have not again experienced the dreadful mood of a few days ago. The events of the present time are remote, that is, that although I feel them quite clearly, they do not torment me.

We have received a parcel sent from Saratoff by Lena before Mummie's arrival; home-made pastry. I was frightfully pleased, not about the pastry but about the breath of home which it brought with it. It reminded me of our home life, normal ordinary . . . and I felt happy and

26th-27th February, 1918

sad at the same time. How I long for *my* life, for my own surroundings ! How tired I am of knocking about in other people's houses !

Sometimes it is pleasant to dream, to picture the future, a not very distant one. . . . Peace steals into the soul : a quiet joy fills it.

Now, to-day I have been dreaming about Mummie's return ; about the way I should spend my summer, trying to forget that I shall not be able to live like *that* really. This soothed me and gave me pleasure, great pleasure. You know, when you walk along the streets and dream, their noise seems quite different from what it is in reality. You don't hear it. All the sounds merge into one confused din, and you only hear the words, which you are pronouncing in your mind and thus form thoughts. And suddenly . . . you wake up. For a second you cease to think : all seems silent. How inanimate, remote everything appears—above all, how quiet. It is the thoughts that are hushed. A curious sensation. . . . You look and you think ; why is that ? In my imagination people seem to be moving about without any connection with each other : I see horses, motors flitting by : and all this is as strange as if you yourself were looking on merely as a spectator and without taking any part in the general movement, in the general life. Such moments do not occur very often, they demand a total suspension of thought.

Do other people experience such impressions ?

Moscow

Or the feeling that we are still in the midst of life and are, in spite of this, capable of looking at all things objectively? Probably. Wells wrote that he felt this. . . .

What a medley of thoughts find room in man's brain, I mean mine, and of such a heterogeneous kind. . . .

What do I want to-day when I am in a quiet and sensible mood? War or peace? I say war. I prefer war even if they take everybody—and I know my people will go too—rather than that peace should be signed.

I want it.

I ask myself: "All right! We shall have war. But you know that in this case you will not be able to settle down, that your life will be as broken up as it has been all this time." And I answer: "No matter, I *want* war!! This is my last word." I read with pleasure that members of the "Intelligentsia" have signed on with the Red Guards.

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I looked at my pastry and wanted to cry. Somehow I wanted Mummie to be with me. It is the remembrance of home which is upsetting me. . . . That is why I want to cry. . . . I want so much, so much to be at home. . . .

28TH FEBRUARY. Nothing new. The General Secretariat—the present Government of Ukraine

27th—28th February, 1918

—has informed Germany that it is ready to make peace, if the latter will not interfere with the internal affairs of Ukraine. I am awaiting Kuhlmann's answer with great impatience. To tell the truth, I should like him to agree. Then we shall be able to go to Kieff.

Ukraine, if I look at it as an independent country, is foreign to me. And though I know that this peace is dishonest, yet I want it all the same. But how can we live quietly there, when here, in the heart of Russia, we shall have the Germans lording it over us? Our conscience will torment us. How can we live there, happily and quietly, soothing ourselves with the thought that *THEY ARE NOT WHERE WE ARE*, while the country is pining away under the foreign yoke?

If only our people could repulse the Germans! Will they be really allowed to overrun Russia? No, we shall fight. Why does Society remain so inert? What could I do? With what joy would I not welcome the chance of doing a little, however small. . . .

But I shall not go into the Red Army. Something is holding me back.

Why does a man really go to the war? Because a secret voice tells him that it is wrong to sit with folded hands. . . . And so he goes. He goes of his own accord, so that he may not be tortured by his conscience. What is the use of that one man in the general scheme? But every one who acts thus, takes a hand in the making of history in

Moscow

general, and fulfils his part in the creation of an historical event.

1ST MARCH. Yesterday towards evening a letter came from Kieff. Aunt Aniuta writes that four shells fell into their house, but caused no damage.

Not a word about Ira's child ; their silence surprises me. Grandfather is in very poor health, he has grown much weaker, owing to the continual excitement. I am dreadfully sorry about Grandfather, for he will have to go through agonizing pain. Better if the end came at once than to suffer thus. Poor dear ! Also we have read in the papers that people are now forbidden to enter Moscow. This greatly upset me with regard to Mummie. I feel again that some indefinable horror is pressing down upon me. This sensation is easy to describe ; it is the feeling that this is a calamity that cannot be averted. Every second I feel it coming nearer : it is on all sides, not leaving the tiniest loophole through which to escape. These thoughts are the more terrible as one clearly realizes that to evade them is out of the question. They come closer, closer still, and one already begins to suffocate from lack of air. And you feel the necessity to forget yourself, to forget this fatal, inevitable doom, at least for a brief respite.

The more you think about it, the more inactive you remain under its impending menace, the more terrible, the more frightful it seems. Safety lies

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in finding so much to do that there is no time left to think.

This horror has even a definite shape. It is as if four stone walls were closing in upon you. . . . These walls crush man with their huge dimensions. . . . Looking upon them, he feels himself a pigmy. . . . It seems to him that they are absorbing all the air and that he is being stifled . . . and so we also experience this same feeling of being crushed.

Now I understand that in order to feel the whole weight of the situation one must have somebody who is NEAR and dear to one in the thick of it. In these minutes one feels with all one's heart and one's soul how awful it is. . . . You feel and in spite of it you do not understand. . . . One can only achieve perfect understanding through seeing one's own life involved in the catastrophe.

To-day, thank God, Father obtained a certificate to the effect that Mummie is a permanent inhabitant of Moscow.

One *wants to believe* that all will end well.

Now yesterday when I was trying to forget myself, not only to forget that Mummie might perhaps not be allowed to return to Moscow, but also to escape from the inevitable burden of suffering and apprehension, the cause of which is steeped in shadow, I understood and sympathized with the man who drinks from sorrow. . . . He is driven to steep himself in oblivion. . . .

I clearly represented to myself his spiritual suffer-

Moscow

ing and felt that before despising a drunkard one ought to pity him. He drowns his trouble in wine ; for him it is the road to forgetfulness. He feels the torturing need to escape from himself, otherwise the load of suffering will crush him. And he drinks, he drinks one glass . . . his consciousness is still alive—it is not yet drowned . . . and he will drink, drink until he is senseless, otherwise something awful will happen to him.

Consciousness re-awakens and reminds him of his sorrow and again he will drink, drink without an end until he drops. . . .

Did not the Russian people drink too much, because they suffered so ? Yes and no. Many may have done so, but it is not always the only reason which influences the drunkard. Some simply find pleasure in drinking vodka. I am not sorry for them.

Never a day passes but that I remember home. I do not know why life there attracts me so much, but I only recall it as an infinitely happy time. And therefore I pine for Mummie's arrival, because she will bring with her the aroma of *our house*. . . . Though I always pine for Mummie. . . .

When I picture to myself our family supper (why just this in particular ?) how long ago that was, even before Mummie went to the Caucasus. . . . Or our children's tea with Raya, "little Miss" and C.C. How delightful that was ! Or when I sat at work or went to Aunt Lisa—precious memories ! Why is the soul so much attracted

1st—2nd March, 1918

by these inanimate objects? If Mummie would only come and bring with her a whiff of that home atmosphere. Not even of home, for it has no longer a place in my remembrance, this word is dead: but the perfume of that beautiful, wonderful, glorious world. . . .

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I have just heard that Jlobino has been taken by the Germans. The brutes! What will happen to us? I do not matter, but Dearest will suffer so much. Probably we shall have to remain in Moscow.

Ah, Mummie, come back quickly, my darling! I wait for you. . . .

I notice another disagreeable feeling. . . . It is, fortunately, one I can define clearly. It is that while I am writing I suddenly realize the pettiness of all these things to which I am devoting myself with all my heart.

2ND MARCH.—Bad tidings, Kieff has fallen. . . . The *Communiqué* in the newspapers is quite brief and seems to indicate that there has been little fighting. However, that is not the point. Kieff has fallen. It is in German hands.

Kieff, that town so near to my heart where my own people are living . . . and now it is across the frontier and in enemy hands. Odd!

They have taken it. And the dreadful part is

Moscow

that they come like friends "to free Ukraine from the All Russian yoke."

Have there been battles? What is happening now? And people go on living . . . what strange inconsistencies there are in life! Curiously enough I do not worry about my relations although they are now completely cut off from us. They belong to another world. . . . How long will this forced alienation last? . . . Kieff has fallen—how much there lies in these words.

But now that we have grown accustomed to the unceasing advance of the Germans, they do not produce the same terrifying impression as they would have created during the real war. . . . *Kieff* has fallen. . . . They have taken it. . . . Oh, the devils! . . .

And so I am calm with regard to our relations. I hope that there will be no looting, and that they will leave Kieff. Perhaps they are happy at the idea that order will be restored. But, in reality, the Ukrainian troops, who were partly responsible for taking the town, belong to their own army. To what a pass things have come. That their own people should combine with the enemy to march on them!

I am unable to take in the fact that the Germans are masters of Kieff and that all of a sudden it has become alien. . . . Will it really remain in their hands? My God, what misfortune that would be! So much that is truly Russian is bound up

2nd March, 1918

with Kieff. No, it is impossible. It belongs to us. Kieff, my dear, my own—a German town! Impossible!

They will give it to the Ukraine. Thank you, this is generous indeed! They will depart in due course, but will it not really remain theirs all the same? How that hurts!

I am sorry for Dearest. This will be a blow to her. She will be frantically unhappy at being unable to return home. But I am glad, for at least we shall not have to see the Germans. . . . What is going to happen now? Dearest will come—how anxiously I am waiting for her. I cannot even call it longing, but I just wait . . . wait yearningly . . . I am sorry, so sorry for Mummie. . . .

All right then: shall we at least be able to settle down? This is humorous: to “settle down” while one dreads the coming of the enemy.

Saratoff is out of the question, that means we must make up our minds to forget all about the “Boches” and to take up our abode here, and, of course, for good. A small furnished flat, but at least our very own . . . I shall begin to study. . . . Good Lord! Isn't it funny at such a time? But it is impossible to sit down and wait for what is coming. *One must live one's own life* and try to forget that everything is liable to come down on top of you at any moment. *One must live.*

The present times completely destroy individual life: we are obliged to force ourselves to live. . . .

Peace is signed! What is going to happen next?

Moscow

The-cursed times. How can one live? What is coming?

3RD MARCH. I really cannot find fitting words to give an idea of what I am passing through at present. I feel too many emotions, and they vary every minute. The difficulty is that as soon as I begin to write about one thing another disappears. I find it impossible to give each thing its place, so that I may feel that the one only represents a part of the other and that all these parts together constitute a whole: our frame of mind and all our feelings.

I feel light and happy and should like to think about the future, even not to think at all, only to keep that sensation of happiness and buoyancy. It is as if an invisible orchestra in my soul were playing tender and caressing melodies. These are not mere words, not phrases—this is a genuine emotion and I feel exactly what I have written. But this sensation does not fill my soul, it only flits across its surface. . . .

Sometimes my inner peace again gives place to the customary tension and then I want to cry. To cry because I feel that I am lonely: that I want Mummie . . . but in reality because my light-heartedness is leaving me. . . . Yes, life ages, breaks one. . . . Take Raya for instance, she is light-hearted, she lives normally but I am cut adrift. The times have too great a hold upon me, my own life is broken on the wheel. . . .

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At such moments I yearn to live as I used to do at home. I want to live as I lived formerly : I want to be free and careless ; not to feel this everlasting strain. I am only fourteen ! I have the right to be still a child for a little while, to be careless, happy, untroubled. . . .

Why have the memories of that old life returned ? It is because I received letters from Raya and Isa. I have become much older than Raya. This unnatural life has beaten me down and yet forced my development, whereas Raya has remained more of a child.

How pleasant it is to write to the accompaniment of music : some one is playing the piano in the drawing-room.

I am content to have become more mature, and on the other hand I am sorry for myself, sorry that I no longer have the same calm : I am glad of the achievement, but not of the price I am paying for it. But this will also pass. . . .

I understand now what Raya meant when she said that she is sorry that she knows so much, that she is no longer a child. I also am sorry.

The letters which I have received have given me much pleasure. But they have come as if they were from another world where the air is not so charged with electricity, where one lives more easily and quietly. . . .

Thank God, this week will bring Dearest at last. . . .

While I read Mummie's letter I kept thinking :

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she is selling our furniture, packing ; she is busy with that, she does not worry about the general situation. . . . Why do I feel it so much ? Why can others enjoy their life in spite of everything and I cannot ?

It seems to me that I belong to quite another world. It is just as if some one who was ill and could not walk wondered at seeing other children run and jump about. That is what happens to me. So there seems to be an abyss between Raya and myself.

How strange it is that in the huge machine of life, past, present and future, there should be a fourteen-year-old girl who is sitting and writing all kinds of stupid things about her small soul, which to her seems something immense, and that she occupies herself so seriously with something which is really small and of no consequence. . . . But to her it seems all-important and she wholly surrenders herself to it. How strange is this abstraction ; how strange the isolation of *my* little life in comparison with that other which is so immeasurably big.

4TH MARCH. In the political world the only news is that the treaty seems to have been signed by the Russians and under very heavy conditions, among which are that Batum and other places have to be given up to the Turks. However, this is by no means the worst : we are completely crushed in an economical and in a political sense. . . . By the by, this peace does not actually exist and it is doubtful if it ever will materialize, even if the Russian

3rd-4th March, 1918

Government does not actually wage war. So much is heard on all sides *against* peace, that it seems likely that at any rate guerilla-war will continue. If only our spirit is stronger, we may still win and it seems to be blazing up again. Let us hope we shall fight on.

I read with joy that the Germans have been defeated near Vitebsk. This is only a proof that we are not definitely played out. But how long can war continue?

We can afford to give ground and retreat for a long time. But in that case when will the end come? I must quote Tolstoy. "Only if the spirit of a nation is broken can the enemy be considered victorious." In other cases victory and defeat are merely conventional terms.

(Added by Nelly in her handwriting.) Have I not thought much in Moscow? I do not regret this time, 25th October, 1918.

Only the future can show what will be the outcome of such a war. In any case, we can affirm that if we definitely decide to fight we are still in a position to do so. This is why peace is unacceptable.

* * * * *

. . . . In the letter received from Mother, she writes that she is packing and working very hard.

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Dearest says that she has sold the furniture of the nursery and the bedroom, and other different household objects. All this pleased me, because it reminded me of home and of our domestic arrangements. I experienced the feeling that this letter came from another world, where everything is in activity and motion, but most of all I pictured to myself the familiar surroundings. I felt everything that was happening there, near and far at the same time—a strange sensation.

Mummie will come and bring the things we need most and we shall settle down. What is one to think of the German advance? Perhaps in Moscow we shall not see it. If you are always taking all kinds of possibilities into account the whole of life might be passed in waiting for something. More energy, more force to live; more hope, more joy of living!

I think that if we settle down in Moscow it will only be for a time, and without our furniture as Aunt Emma did when she came here. And that makes me happy because it is so near.

Afterwards. I love to sit in a room which is entirely furnished to the very curtains in the windows. It presents to my eyes an infinitely cosy appearance, which conveys very much to me: it talks, reminding me of my home, of that other life. . . . Oh, if it only came more quickly. . . .

Generally speaking, in order to understand the full meaning of words they must bring to our minds definite pictures. Only then can it be said

4th—5th March, 1918

that their meaning is clear to us. What is a word? A letter? Sometimes it seems so funny to me. Nothing but a scrawl—and we read it “M.” Why thus and not “W”? A mere convention, necessary—but a convention.

Why does “berry” read “berry” and not “jam”? And why do you clearly visualize the object which is meant by that word? Such a little word—and representing so much. Very curious. But without these strange things, there would be no life, no cultured life . . . no life of any kind. . . . Everything, everything is a convention.

Sometimes words are alive, and sometimes they are dead. When one writes a thing oneself and then reads what one has written, the words live; behind them there are pictures.

The writer sees exactly what he wanted to say, but for others they can be dead, and while indicating certain ideas they do not make a continuous picture, like that which the author had in mind and tried to create through a combination of words.

Therefore in order to get a clear idea of the value of his work he should allow his enthusiasm to cool, and glance at his precious offspring with the look of an impartial judge, before he surrenders it to the verdict of others. . . .

Oh! How I should like to possess this precious gift. . . . To be a writer; writing seems to be such happiness. . . .

5TH MARCH. How the times break us! Some-

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times, when I remember that because of them we are unable to settle down ; when I see how our life is shattered, I am seized by a faint-hearted apprehension of what is ahead and am no longer in a condition to do anything or even to think. All the same I wish it were not so—and that I could forget myself, but there is no possibility of doing this ; however much I may drive away this threatening phantom it comes back all the same. One cannot live thus, one has not sufficient strength. . . . How hard it is. How one wants to cry, to sob. . . . How painfully lonely I feel, how passionately I wish for Mother to be near me. To cling to her might mean to forget this oppression, perhaps it would be possible to be at peace. . . . She is like an anchor of hope. . . . O my dearest, make haste, make haste. . . . How oppressive are these moments.

This is where, to my mind, the disastrous influence of our epoch tells on children. I now understand why they say that one year of this life is equal to ten years of a normal quiet existence. Yet the times do not make any impression on Raya, this is clear from her letter ; looking at it in this light, she is a child and I am grown up.

All the same I would not agree to exchange my knowledge for her ignorance, and it seems to me that even when we shall have settled down I shall have greater understanding than other children

5th March, 1918

of my age. It is not in vain that one passes through the school of adversity.

I am so tired, so inexpressibly tired of this life. And though life will not be better then, my state of mind will be quieter. But it is the general life which is the cause of my weariness, it is the root of the whole.

I have decided to fight against this feeling of apathy, which takes possession of me at such moments of depression. I do not want to allow them. But in order to attain this result, I must not permit my private life to be affected by general conditions.

How shall I do this? I shall drive away my thoughts as soon as they touch upon dangerous ground. I . . . I shall *deceive myself*. Yes, one must confess that in the end it will only be self-deception. But what matter. It will hurt no one, and for me it will be better, it will do me good.

One must tell oneself that things are not so bad as they seem. This is what I want to do and I hope that I shall be able to accomplish it. I shall not surrender to this inner voice which faint-heartedly whispers to me that our life is inextricably tied up with this epoch, and moreover united in such a way that it can never be adjusted; that therefore everything is at an end and that nothing will come out of it. No, I do not want this. I shall obstinately tell myself that—how can I say it most tenderly?—that with *Mummie's* arrival all will be well. I

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shall not allow myself to be influenced by the newspapers, which bring sad news. I shall not brood over the fact the news is worse again, and that in consequence our position is all the more deplorable. In four or five years, all *must* settle down—and I will leave it at that.

This I want to believe all the time and then everything will be right.

You get up in the morning. You dawdle about a little and go about your business. The weather is magnificent. The sun shines brilliantly from a blue sky, but though not even warm, it makes you feel light-hearted and happy. All that is oppressive disappears, leaving room for dreams as radiant as the colours of the rainbow.

There is nothing in these dreams, but because the sun is shining and all is luminous around you, they also transform themselves into something bright and clear.

I have tried to dream about the same things, but without the sun, and—strange to say—was unable to do so. They had no longer the same charm.

How can one help loving nature, how can one be indifferent to it?

6TH MARCH. How hard it is ! Every day after dinner, while the latest news is discussed, I am seized by an awful oppression and I madly want to cry. To-day it is worse than ever, I do not see the reason clearly, I simply feel sad, sad, . . .

5th—6th March, 1918

I know it comes from the times in which we are living.

At dinner-time, the illusion created by the morning that *our* life will soon become normal, definitely takes flight. Everything becomes steeped in gloom, there is no dawn and one's heart grows heavy, so heavy ! Now I understand why life in Moscow is so dreadful ; not through the famine, but because of the general nervousness and the highly-charged atmosphere.

It is difficult not to become callous when we hear daily of seizures of houses in Moscow by anarchists, of aeroplanes that fly over the city . . . but it is best to look at things more soberly, and not to allow oneself to be so much affected by them. All this produces a sad and depressing effect because life is disorganized, and I feel uprooted and broken.

I find it very, very difficult to keep my life separate from that of the country. How can I reassure myself that with Mummie's arrival we shall go back to normal conditions, when I know that every day brings unpleasant surprises ?

This is the feeling that overcomes me at times—usually for half an hour after dinner—but it has just gone and I feel relieved and all right again. It seems to me, however, that when everything appears in such gloomy colours, my outlook is more logical, for the situation is truly desperate.

No, one should not despair and this is why : however things may turn out for us in general, it is

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impossible that nothing should happen, because there must be "something" in the end. *Something*. We shall wait for that which destiny has in store for us. Properly speaking, man always lives through faith and hope in the future : it is this hope that sustains him and without it life would be impossible.

This is why it seems to me that my Dearest fretted so much in Saratoff : the future held nothing there but emptiness. . . .

We children, that is those among us who are more or less thoughtful, the rising generation, live by hope ; that is clear. . . . But the grown-ups ?

Later. No, however I may try to soothe myself, it is impossible to separate our private life from all that is around us. The abnormal conditions weigh on us all the time. The drawback of my temperament is that I have no happy medium : either I abandon myself to despair completely or I am inclined to forget myself altogether.

Of course the worst part of our present life lies in the knowledge that it is temporary, and that we do not know when it will take a definite shape, while feeling that the time must come when it will do so. . . . If I were told that I should have to live always as I am living now, that would be quite different and I should resign myself, but I know that it is but a transient phase.

There is another peculiarity which has become more noticeable, thanks to that same abnormal

6th—8th March, 1918

existence. Formerly, in *olden* times (I catch myself listening to the front door bell in the hopes that it might be Mummie), when we lived in Saratoff and I attended the gymnasium and everything went on its ordered way, the days seemed more vivid ; they had their definite colouring. Wednesday looked like this, Saturday like that, and Sunday, a fortnight hence, also has its characteristics. When spring came, I knew that it would bring in its wake definite changes ; the end of the scholastic year, the coming of the summer holidays, our removal to our "datcha,"¹ etc. . . . Now this is so no longer. All the days have become grey and, looking into the future, I see them all alike. Spring is on its way but it brings nothing : all is of a sameness, and I can no longer distinguish, as I did then, the rich colouring of its advent. I begin to feel that the seasons, even time itself, are at a standstill. And that is because I do not look forward to the changes which the seasons invariably bring with them.

8TH MARCH. To-day has been an extraordinarily happy day and for this reason all my philosophy has altered. We have received a letter from Mummie in which she says that she will probably leave Saratoff on Saturday, and will be here on Monday. We hear, too, that several people arrived at Moscow without the needful permits.

¹ Summer residence.

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Mummie will come and we shall take a flat, it is lucky that Father has at last found one, and we shall begin to live. Hurrah ! How lovely that will be !

When all goes well one regains belief in the future, and all appears in a rosy light. . . . I want to think that it will colour our lives and that everything will come out all right in the end.

For the time being one can live in Moscow. Others live there and so can we. Tra la la ! Won't it be nice ?

Yesterday evening when I read in the papers about the prohibition to enter Moscow, I felt, oh so upset ! It seemed bitterly unfair that Mummie should not be allowed to return. . . . And this morning just the same. So then I tried to console myself with my philosophy, but even then my feeling remained one of bitterness, resentment and sadness. I told myself : " There is no reason to despair, something is going to happen."

Yet the situation had got so much worse, that my reasoning to the effect that " something " was sure to happen was of small comfort. To get any reassurance from it one would have had to assume that this " something " had of necessity to be good : in this case, that Mummie was sure to come.

But, for the time being, all my hopes are centred round Mummie, for at present there is greater hope

8th-9th March, 1918

of her arrival, and it is no use to worry in advance about what will happen.

A philosophy of one's own is certainly a useful thing, for it makes life easier ; only in order that it should be genuine, it must be taught by the sorrows of life and be entirely founded upon them. Then only can one live according to its teaching, for a dry bookish philosophy is not applicable to life.

9TH MARCH. No; I cannot understand how people can live absolutely apart from the interests and experiences of their fellow-men. For me that is all that matters for the present.

Take, for instance, reading. . . . As soon as nothing in the subject reminds me of our time, it becomes definitely distant. It's the same with the theatres. They seem just now to belong to a foreign world ; certainly a wonderful world, but all the same, it is further away from me than this cruel one, in which I am now living. And therefore I cannot wish to go to the theatres as passionately, as ardently as I did before. If I go I shall enjoy it. But it would only be a temporary respite from reality.

I have already said that it seems to me that time has stopped and that it has gone by another road. At one time I said "spring," "summer," "autumn," "winter," "next year," "when I grow up," etc. But now all that is lost, everything is involved in what is going to happen in general,

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what events will bring forth. . . . There is no other standard. Yes, the times have set their seal on the formation of mankind. Since October, when I left home, I have learnt much, reflected upon many things, and have become a different person. And therefore I am glad that I have lived through a great deal. Formerly I was blinded by my surroundings, now I see everything in its true aspect. Well, then, I am unable to visualize our private life. I can only imagine it full of trivial personal interests. I thought of it yesterday evening, and was unable to grasp it.

I wonder so much whether I shall ever know what it is to live a full life, but I should like it so much.

What shall I write about? Of course, I cannot touch upon any other subject except the times through which we are passing, for I have no other interest. Taking it as a whole, this is the present position. Peace has been concluded; nobody knows whether the Germans are still continuing their advance, but it is generally thought that they are doing so.

Petrograd is being evacuated: on the south the Germans and the Ukrainians are moving forward: in the Far East the Allies are on the point of intervention. . . . In the interior of the country the disruption is complete: the food question has become acute, but, for the present, everything is obtainable if one has money enough. Every day new houses and villas are being requisitioned. . . .

9th-11th March, 1918

The anarchists become visibly stronger. . . . This, of course, cannot be connected with the general situation.

On Tuesday, the anniversary of the Revolution, a manifestation of the Bolsheviks is expected, and it is rumoured that it will be directed against the anarchists ; this is considered to be more than likely. It promises to be a warm business. . . .

This is an example of how muddled I get : sometimes I take a flight into the future, though it does not often happen now, and at once the idea strikes me, " How can you think about what will happen to *you* when you do not even know how much time is left to you ? " My dreams, anyway, are without substance, time or place. . . .

When I dream I do not try to imagine what is coming. I simply feel thankful that I can dream at all. . . .

11TH MARCH. I have been through a great deal since I wrote last time. Yes, so much that I do not know where to begin.

My last news and great joy is that Mummie will arrive on Thursday, and this is almost certain. It seems that only those are allowed to enter Moscow who always live here, or are accidentally separated from their families. Oh God ! How I wish that at any rate nothing should happen *now* to prevent Mummie from coming at last. I do not know why I am awaiting her arrival with such a sickening anxiety to-day. My joy does not come because it

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may bring changes, or because she will bring news. . . . I simply want her to come most dreadfully.

* * * *

To-morrow is the anniversary of the Revolution. There will be a holiday, processions, meetings. . . . But will this day pass calmly and peacefully? Many say that it will be "jolly." . . .

A year ago! How vividly I remember the unanimous feeling of gladness which seized all the Russians at the first news of freedom. How exciting, how joyful it all was. A year has passed. . . . How many changes! The spring feast, when everything around us seemed basking in the rays of the sun and steeped in radiance, has become a terrible drama. There are no illusions . . . gone are the fairy tales of spring. . . . Stern life has arisen before us. How harsh and forbidding it is. How old we have grown in this one year, which has held enough to fill ten. How much, how much everything has altered. Nevertheless, there have previously been epochs like ours, equally cruel and ruthless. . . . If we look at our time from an historical point of view, we shall not dwell on the hopeless anarchy, on this picture full of gloom and despair from which there seems no escape, but only regard it as a process, far reaching and grandiose, it is true, in its magnitude and importance, but, all the same, representing only a single step in history.

11th—14th March, 1918

The world has existed so far ; it will outlive this catastrophe, after having outlived so many others. . . . Time will pass . . . just the same. . . . Everything will pass, peace will reign again, till there comes a new eruption. . . . And for this reason,—and the words are not mine, but it is impossible to find anything that fits the case better—the question does not lie with what will happen in the future, but how we OURSELVES are to outlive this nightmare, hampered with such narrow vision as is ours. . . . If only we could hold out ! But the world will survive. . . . We do not know what the future contains, but we can say with certainty that there will be “something.” But maybe we shall never know, for we may die before this sanguinary epic has run its course.

14TH MARCH. Mummie has not arrived. She will come on Saturday, and this I trust will be the very last time she is kept back.

I hope the hours will pass quickly ; it is already five o'clock. To-morrow the children will come and I shall play with them. And after that Saturday will be near at hand.

There is but little that is good in political life. On the 17th we shall hear whether the peace treaty has been ratified : it looks as if it has been.

When one does not read the papers it is possible to forget oneself a little, but after all it is impossible not to read them. And the only difference lies in this that you send yourself to sleep and live in a

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different world, where everything is not so terrible and gloomy. But nevertheless, the papers must be read because their world—however horrible—is the real one, life ; and that illusion which is created by ignorance is false, and one must live by reality. One must have the courage to live, as life comes. And to what end is this self-deception ? When events force themselves upon us, real life seizes you in its merciless grip.

During the last few days, however, I have kept away from the papers, and what do you think ? It has become worse. A kind of emptiness has formed inside me ; the last interest that still upheld me has disappeared. Now I feel a complete absence of any interests and an all-embracing apathy. I only live in expectation . . . until Mummie comes. I have thrown up the sponge. Nothing is left, nothing. . . .

This is what it seems like ; around me everything is grey, cold and deserted, all is of a uniform grey-ness, and far away a bright light, Mummie's arrival, Saturday. Why it burns so clearly I do not know, probably because it is of a different colour from all that surrounds it ; and also some instinct tells me that it is bright and kindly. And I know that, sooner or later, this light will reach me, and knowing this I do not want to do anything, but just . . . to wait.

In Nelly's handwriting—I have re-read these pages with deep enjoyment, 12th October, 1918.

14th March, 1918

Evening. They say that the question of peace is settled and that Moscow is declared a commune.

I cannot imagine clearly what that means, and it is only a conjecture, for it has not yet appeared as a decree and I only listened to Father who read it aloud very quickly.

Nothing new apart from this. The commissaries are intending to make a clearance in the press by suppressing all the bourgeois papers. Indeed, the situation scarcely changes, and what change there is does not improve matters. It is really as bad as ever. And there is so much that is grievous awaiting us in the future. So much ! Shall we really be able to survive the great Russian Revolution, not only to live through it ? Our parents say to us, "*We* can never again hope to live quietly, but you will be able to do so. . . ." But this is a question of the future, and of the future alone.

Do you know when I read the papers I sometimes feel this . . . historically. This is what I mean. In the first place I must be in a quiet mood, otherwise the news lies on my soul like a stone, and I am unable to feel anything except its weight, which is suffocating me.

It is possible that when I am agitated my views on what is happening are more correct. That is, I see everything more clearly than when I am quiet. But I surrender too quickly to a feeling of despondency.

To-day, when reading the papers, I diverted my

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mind from all that is personal and looked at the times we are living in as if from a great height, calmly, objectively. . . .

16TH MARCH. Mummie did not arrive to-day. . . . At the present moment it is impossible to go to Kieff. Perhaps some time later on. But the rub is that "later on" has already lasted since 1st January, two and a half months. Therefore the question is what to do during this time? Remain with auntie, as we are now, or take our own flat? Shall we continue this promiscuous existence or begin something normal, studies: shall we live in our own flat? How shall we live then? Normally. This is a stupid answer and only an empty sound. But one must be content with it. No. I know what a normal life looks like, but I am unable to represent it to myself under a definite image, there is nothing to do except to wait.

Another thing worries me: How will Dearest stand this? The make-shifts of this life torment her terribly. This is why I think we shall move into our own quarters. But if so, how will Dearest live? Will this same sadness and longing last eternally? No, no, this must not be. But even if we have a roof of our own, will it be any better then? How will my Joy feel about it? What will she do? Really this worries me frightfully, and I cannot find a solution. . . .

Don't you think that it is stupid to sit like this

16th-20th March, 1918

and to wait for something? The time goes and here we sit and sit as before. This is idiotic. Our life at aunt's in Moscow and all the rest of it.

It is really strange : Why do we live at all ? To what purpose ? Every day we go to bed, in the morning we get up, we eat, we drink, and so without an end. . . . Like a wound-up machine. . . . What is it that forces people to live in such a fashion ? Strange.

How many strange things there are when once one begins to ponder over them. There are so many of them . . . Peace is ratified ! The social revolutionaries have separated themselves from the Bolsheviks. Japan is expected to take military action.

20TH MARCH. How many, many new impressions I have amassed during the days on which I did not write !

I have come to the conclusion that a diary is a kind of stocktaking of oneself. I feel lost without it, it seems unusual only to feel one's impressions and then discard them, forget them : I am too much accustomed to confiding everything to my diary.

There is an endless quantity of news, but at the root nothing is changed, nothing has become different. I will first relate what concerns us. . . . In Saratoff everything has been packed up by Mummie, only the bare walls remain. A part of

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our belongings, not the furniture, which of course remained there, but wearing apparel, bed and table linen, and the stores, Mummie took with her. They go by rail, one portion has arrived, the other is on the way ; let us hope that it will not be lost. In a word nothing of ours remains in Saratoff except the furniture.

We have definitely left there, and now that we are here, it is impossible to move on to Kieff ; even quite uncertain when we shall be able to do so. Must we wait until the Germans take Moscow ? How painful it is to hear so many people talking about it with such satisfaction. Or until peace is concluded with Ukraine ? We do not know, but the present arrangement is that we must wait another month or two, possibly more.

...
Luckily Dearest also thinks that we can no longer go on as we are ; and therefore it has been decided that we shall have a home of our own.

We are again going to live with Uncle I., but neither as guests nor hosts because we shall rent two rooms from him ; housekeeping expenses and board will be in common and Mummie will do the housekeeping. When it becomes possible we shall go to Kieff : and towards winter with God's help get definitely settled. As our position becomes more clear, our outlook brightens.

26TH MARCH. It is a long time since I wrote

20th—26th March, 1918

last. . . . Our life is in good order, in a few days all the masters will be engaged, and then regular studies will begin and at the same time my private life.

We have settled in very comfortably and feel quite at home, though of course it is impossible to dispense with occasional clouds—and they are there,—but on the whole everything runs smoothly and I am very happy.

During the last weeks, from the time when we moved, my frame of mind, my attitude towards all that is happening around me has begun to change and to become more like the normal attitude of mind of a fourteen-year-old child. I understand Raya now. I understand her, not as before when I felt an unhealthy, painful wonder that her life remained so normal ; I understand her because I now feel exactly in the same way as she does.

Those events which take place apart from me, and do not break up the course of my life, have again become remote. I now understand perfectly that individual life is possible in the capital as well as in the provinces, with the only difference that living in Moscow one knows what is happening ; on the whole there is not much to choose between the two with regard to the disturbing effect it has on private life. Not counting, of course, such things as the dearness and scarcity of provisions, the question of personal safety, etc. And the difference is not great because one of the laws of

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nature tells us that whatever may happen in general, man's individual life must run its course, if he himself is not caught up in the maelstrom of general events. While man himself remains immune, he lives his own life.

This is a strange law. I cannot understand it, because examining it, it seems to contain a contradiction, a strangeness, which my mind cannot grasp.

Just now L.A. told Mummie over the telephone that he has found a teacher for me—the best in Moscow. I am frightfully pleased. It is so very nice to learn with a good master. How glad I am !

But a short time ago, perhaps only a week, I felt differently, I had another attitude towards all that was happening. I had nothing, or nearly nothing, but general interests. . . .

27TH MARCH. Yes, now that we are settled my outlook has entirely changed.

However, my interest for all that is going on has not abated. I have only become calmer, and am now taken up with my private interests, which hide the rest from me, and make it recede.

There is a law, of which I have already written, which demands that man should live regardless of the background to his life. It is a strange ruling—strange to the highest degree. At the time when the Mother country, and all that belongs to

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us, is perishing during one of the greatest upheavals in history, at a time, still more, when all the luck favours the enemy (whoever he may be in our eyes), and our side is weak and helpless ; when it seems to us that the end has come for all that is good and beautiful, at that time, man is capable of thinking about himself, he is able to worry about his own petty interests ! Even more : he is able to enjoy himself !

Is not this extraordinary ? Does it not seem that the one ought to eliminate the other ?

Meanwhile we see the reverse, we see people who in our hard times live their own full lives ; and seeing it, we must conclude that such a law exists.

The only question is this : how much of that individual life is natural, and where does it overstep the bounds set by law ? Some of our acquaintances, for instance, asked Aunt Emma to go with them to "Yar."¹ This proposal was refused with indignation. . . . "You have chosen the right time for it," said Uncle ironically. True, it is not the right time for it, I understand this, but why then should it be the right time for theatres and concerts ? For them also it is not the right time. But then why less so for the first than for the second ? Why is it more scandalous ? Where should the line be drawn in such a case ?

What shall I say if you ask me : "Is it necessary to study now ?" I should laugh into your face :

¹ A night restaurant near Moscow.

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“ A strange question,” I shall answer, “ of course it is necessary, because time has nothing to do with it. . . .”

And I shall be right, shall I not ? Individual life must exist regardless of boundaries, but all the same it remains cramped ; it is necessarily hemmed in by the events of the times. . . .

CHAPTER 2

Kieff, April, 1918—January, 1919

KIEFF, 18TH APRIL. I have committed a crime in not writing for such a frightfully long time. A crime towards myself.

. . . We were living at Uncle I's. We had settled down wonderfully. I took my lessons. All went well. Suddenly a telegram is received from Saratoff: "The doctors advise a change of climate for Louis." It was clear that they were looking for Father.

But we paid no attention to the wire; it seemed as if it would be impossible to locate him in Moscow. We decided this and calmed down. Once towards evening my people were preparing to go to Aunt Emma; Father was ready and Mummie was dressing. There is a ring at the door. The maid Pasha goes to open the door, but first puts the chain across it. She sees a soldier and a civilian.

"What do you want?"

"Does Ptashkin live here?"

"Yes, he does, but he has just left." She guessed that they were unwelcome visitors.

"Open," they commanded. Father meanwhile comes out into the hall. "What is it?" he asks. Pasha goes back as if to send the children away, and explains: "They have come for you." "Tell them I have gone," Father says hastily to her, and

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putting on his cap and coat, he goes away by the back-stairs.

7TH MAY. What an unconscionable time it is since I wrote last. How much has happened in my life in general as well as in our own. Now I think I shall be able to write regularly as I used to do. If only I could relate everything ! We are now in Kieff with Grandfather, who is ill : but not about "the present," first about what "has been."

Father was only able to whisper to Mother, "They have come for me . . . I am off."

Ignorant of all that was taking place, I was sitting in my room.

"Nelliusha, come here," whispered Mummie mysteriously as she came in. Feeling that something was amiss, I hurried to her side. "They have come for Father, they want to arrest him," she explained.

As usual when terrible things are happening, I feel as if my heart was bursting. But there is no time to think, one must act.

Mummie stuffs the belt with the diamonds into my hands ; I put it on. I hide the money and the papers, the rest Mummie gives to the servant, and her cupboard is ready for the search.

In the meantime, Uncle gives our cook Father's note-case to hide ; Lena has been with us for ten years, but she crosses herself and refuses ; "That I should be drowned with it, no thank you. . . ."

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But Uncle's nurse, who has brought up his children, takes it at once.

This is unimportant and adds nothing to the general picture, but, having written it, let it stand.

While Mummie and I were hiding the papers and the other valuables, the commissaries, as was shown later, belonging to "The All Russian Extraordinary Commission to fight the Counter Revolution, Speculation and Sabotage," were conversing with Uncle.

"Ptaschkin lives in your house?"

"He does, but he has just gone."

"How is that?"

"He is a business man, he comes and goes."

"We want to see his room. . . ."

"This way, please. . . ."

"Call the Representative of the House Committee." He was sent for and they waited for him in Uncle's office. They telephoned to the commissary for a militia man, who arrived in due course. . . . Now the House Committee still delayed us. There were two commissaries, a sailor—a Russian, and a civilian—a Lett. . . . The first who was kind-hearted, performed the search quietly, like a duty, phlegmatically. The other was more alive, more eager, and searched with a full consciousness of his importance; he might have been a chief; not only a common worker.

This Lett understood the state of affairs at once;

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that Papa was in Moscow, and that we knew where he was.

"Ring him up and tell him to come," he commanded. But what could he do? How could he force Father to come? Yet though he knew this, he had to pretend that he did not.

9TH MAY. It is tiresome to write about outside events; how much more interesting to speak about one's inner life.

I shall be brief, very brief. Father escaped safely, and ten days later we were under way. . . .

The journey from Moscow to Kieff is no slight undertaking. It is a whole Odyssey, which I really cannot depict: perhaps some other time. For the moment I shall only say this, we travelled through Orsha, Shklov, Globin, Gomel. From there by ship. We arrived here. Grandfather is ill; slowly but surely he is getting near his end. He is very feeble, eats little, but fortunately does not suffer much; what will happen later, no one knows. Grandfather does not know what is the matter with him and for the moment believes the lies of the doctors. He lives in his own house, we are with him. Mummie does the housekeeping. We are always with Grandfather, who cannot be left by himself, and wants Father with him most of all. Naturally our movements are restricted in consequence. The other children come every day.

Sash-Ira have a little girl. She has been called Liza in memory of our dead Grandmother. She is

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just like Ira. . . . One thing more. . . . So far we have no lessons, we shall begin on the first day of June. By that time D.I.L. will be free to teach us. I should so much like to do this, for I had begun to learn with him here in Kieff, and he also came to our house in Saratoff. . . .

10TH MAY. At the beginning of our stay here I spent whole days "learning" by studying the people around me. . . . I have seen much that is new, though nothing new in the realm of life, if you will. Then I have had lots of new and difficult impressions. . . . Now, comparatively they have worn off. . . .

I should like to describe our drive to darling Grannie's grave at the cemetery. Grandmother! How many tender memories are wound round this word which is so precious and dear, especially here amidst these familiar surroundings.

16TH MAY. I write very rarely now and cannot explain why this is so. Simply, I have lost the habit, and therefore find it sometimes hard to resume; it is perhaps also because life is somewhat too regular and monotonous. . . . No, perhaps not. . . . I do not know. . . .

The specialist who visited Grandfather some days ago said that the process is slowing down and that the illness, if it goes on at the present rate, can drag on two or three months. . . . It is possible that the situation may alter in a week, but whatever

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happens, Grandfather will move with us to the datcha this summer. It has already been rented at Swiatoshin.

I find this outlook very attractive ; the only thing I am afraid of is that it may be dull for Mummie, for we shall be by ourselves. If Sash-Ira were with us it would be different, but as things are, Mummie won't be very gay. She will be able to drive into town, but all the same. . . . I am very pleased. . . . I shall have a kitchen garden, collect plants, I want to be nearer to nature. I can do without society and shall not hanker after it. It is a pity that I must work, but it can't be helped.

Two and a half, three months at most, remain to me to pass my exams. At any cost, I do not want to lose a year by failing, it is better to work all day. I shall prepare for the sixth class of the Gymnasium. We shall probably remain here for the winter and I shall enter the Gymnasium with Nina. It is strange, isn't it ; to whom do I talk ? To myself ? But I know all this !

20TH MAY. It is scandalous ; I do not write at all now. What behaviour ! I shall write about the new impressions, not about the old ones ; this is more interesting. On the whole, my life passes quietly and monotonously. I read. . . . This is the only reasonable occupation. To-morrow, true, I shall begin my studies. One must work strenuously to succeed. But I have a great deal of energy and strength and hope with which to do so.

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I am reading just now in Russian, books on Natural Science and History.

. . . . Looking through my Moscow diary, I find a vivid feeling of hatred towards the Germans.

. . . What did I not write at that time ! I thought how terrible, how inconceivable, life under their domination would be, and, involuntarily comparing my attitude towards them then with my present behaviour and attitude, that is, theory versus practice, I feel ashamed.

I also feel ashamed that my high-sounding and noble impulses have remained sterile.

Not that I have reconciled myself to the authority of the Germans—as such it will always revolt me—but this seems only theoretical ; in reality there is no such acute feeling ; that is, I do not feel it acutely, and remain passive with regard to our “conquerors.” . . .

Therefore, when I see Germans here in the street, I do not experience anything in particular. It is, of course, possible to force oneself to think about the horror of their conquest over us, but there is no occasion to speak about a feeling which is artificially produced. Yes, in Moscow I imagined this feeling to be much stronger than it proved in reality, for there it *was* vivid. Yes, I feel ashamed that I have not kept the vow which I made so passionately in Moscow. . . . I said I would not go to the theatre. . . . To-morrow I am going to buy tickets to see Plevitzkaia ! To be frank, my feeling is so superficial that it most closely

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resembles total indifference. . . . All the same, this is only on the surface, or—how am I to call it? If I examine these questions in the abstract, I am, naturally, “against” the Germans, but as a matter of fact, this is not really the case. . . .

KIEFF, 16TH SEPTEMBER. Well, here I am again at my diary. . . . How long it is since I wrote? Nearly six months. I could not write all this time. Now I shall turn again to my diary.

Much, much has changed since I sat last before my copy book. I must speak at least a little about that time, and after that I shall devote myself entirely to the present.

Grandfather is no more. He died in August (1918). His death produced on myself, and I think on all of us, less impression than did Grannie's. I do not know why; the death of a beloved person is always hard to bear. But there are many trifling reasons: we were prepared for it a long time in advance; it was similar in every detail to Grannie's illness.

Grandfather's funeral was imposing. By his attitude to his fellow citizens he had more than deserved the honour paid to him. His death also was uncommon, he died as if he were performing a duty, severely and calmly. There was no agony, he gradually dropped off to sleep. Uncle Kima again was not present. He only learned indirectly of our new misfortunes. All the others were there. . . .

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This winter, of course, we shall spend in Kieff : in Moscow all is as before, perhaps if anything it is worse.

We have settled in Grandfather's flat with Uncle Lyoma.

Later. On account of Father's affairs we shall probably stay definitely in Kieff ; personally, I should like to live in Moscow. On the whole, it is not very important ; I shall finish the Gymnasium here anyhow, and after that I shall go to Moscow to the University. I am sorry for Mummie, but I believe that she will be able to settle down comfortably here.

I have entered the sixth class of the Gymnasium, therefore I have not really lost time. It is hardly necessary to say that I am very pleased. I had to rush through the programme of a whole year in two and a half months this summer—and I passed ! The work was appalling. I refused the few entertainments that could be provided for me ; I did not take walks, did not go to the cinema, did not accompany Sash-Ira when they came to see Grandfather. I used to get up at five in the morning until a succession of family scenes put a stop to this ; then I at once began to work and, with the exception of short intervals, only left my desk to go to bed.

Sometimes temptation whispered to me ; at five I so much wanted to sleep ! I thought " What's the use ? I shall sleep a little longer, only till seven ! " But no, that could not be, I got up and worked. Of course I did not go on like this the

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whole summer, sometimes I allowed myself a rest. But this did not happen more than three or four times, which wasn't excessive, but seemed a crime to me.

The examination began. I passed brilliantly and entered the Gymnasium. For me the triumph was complete. All rejoiced and congratulated me on my achievement. "Smart girl," said Sasha, and I think he was right.

I also rejoiced, not so much that I had passed but that I had attained my object.

So far the work at the Gymnasium is childishly easy. I don't know how it will be later on. All the same I shall have little free time, for I also have lessons in music and English and German. Apart from this I have to read a great deal, without losing a minute, for during the whole summer I never opened a book. It is for this same lack of time that I did not write my diary.

18TH SEPTEMBER. I want to read on many subjects, natural science, astronomy, economics, history, the history of civilization, historical novels, poetry, literature, so that there is no time to lose.

I shall have to keep a strict watch over myself and not allow myself to be idle.

If by giving way to my small weaknesses I do not make use of every minute for reading, I shall lose that which is much more important to me. And besides, it is always the same in life. If you don't keep yourself in hand, you give way to your passions,

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either big or small, and after that you have to repent: worse comes. It is always necessary to exercise control, a strict control, over oneself. "Life is a continual renunciation," it is for these words, so full of a great truth, that I love the "Faust" of Turgenev. But to restrain oneself all one's life! To sacrifice the rapture, the ineffable happiness of even one moment, that is hard. What do you get in return? A dull prosperity and the consciousness of duty fulfilled. . . . But wait . . . when this summer I refused all the small pleasures that came my way, was I not the winner in the end?

There, in the drawing room, Aunt is playing the piano and I should like so desperately to sit in the dark room, lit up by moonshine, on the windowsill, with Raya, with somebody who "understands" and to be carried away into the fairy land of dreams. . . .

I shall fly there with you, oh, my diary. . . . I want something tender, beautiful, magnificent. . . . I would like to write about its fineness, its depths, to paint images. . . . Wings are lifting me up. . . . My thoughts are too misty to be clothed in words; they are only vague outlines. . . . Well, it is over. I am still able to create an image, but the wings are no more. My inspiration would return to me at the bidding of my pen, but I do not want it just now. I shall wait and then, if I am able to. . . . Oh with what joy I would write. . . . Perhaps

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this is vanity ? But even so, what then ? It does no harm, in moderation, and gives me energy for work.

The future is no longer distant : I am fifteen, in three years I shall have finished the Gymnasium. And then real life begins. Reasonable, conscious . . . but happy ? In three years I shall enter the arena of life, shall have to begin for myself the struggle for existence.

My future ? What will it be ? Will my dreams come true ? Shall I live as I have mapped it out for myself ? Rationally, productively, not in vain ?

But this is not enough for me now. To all this I would like to add that " azure world " about which I have spoken sometimes.

But what especial things from that world ? Probably love. I only say probably because this word " love " sounds so insipid and unlike what I imagine it to be, that I feel revolted. And besides, I cannot say that I wish for love ; I simply think a great deal about it.

21ST SEPTEMBER. The wish for something more superficial and gay, which I have never experienced before, becomes daily stronger in me. Perhaps I write too little in my diary after such a long interval.

23RD SEPTEMBER. I seem to have got out of the habit of writing in my diary altogether.

This year, I feel, stronger than ever, the desire to

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live not intellectually alone, but to enjoy the simple pleasures of life in a clean, healthy manner.

I think a good deal about the parties at the Gymnasium, about the boys (I would like to meet some boys I know). Well, that's that. It seems to me that it is enough.

Also, there is something which begins to take up much room in my future life. Not very much, but all the same. . . .

I have always thought about love with emotion and tenderness. A pure, exalted love always moves me. True, I would like to be popular in society. For this winter we have made plans and have arranged dances, but I am afraid that our partners are uninteresting. It is not enough for them to be polite and attentive, I want them to be interesting too ; alas, it seems to me that they are not.

At Christmas we want to get up a play, and a skating party (this is my proposal), and I want to go to the theatre often ; it is so nice to be all together.

. . . I am longing for music, I want operas, concerts. . . . I must also read a good deal and not forget the diary. . . .

24TH SEPTEMBER. I am writing in the morning, before going to the Gymnasium. Since summer I have kept up the habit of rising at six ; in this way I have half an hour, sometimes a whole hour, at my disposal.

Yesterday I finished writing about what is new

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to me. I do not know whether the impression received is complete and correct. I think more about love than formerly. That is, it does not seem to exist in my thoughts themselves, but I see glimmerings of it in everything that surrounds me. I don't care to write about it. . . .

27TH SEPTEMBER. No, really, it is wrong to write so little, I feel ashamed, but there it is. . . . In a word, the woman begins to waken in me. I am fifteen. In three years I shall finish the Gymnasium. What then? I want to travel for a year ; perhaps a year is rather much, for the summer only ; I shall enter the University. At one time I thought of Arts, now I think I shall choose Law. It seems to me that for social work, in which I have definitely decided to take a part, the most fitting education is the law. Apart from this all the roads are open to the woman-lawyer ; in this profession I can be the defender of the feeble and the oppressed, and in the very end perhaps I, too, shall become a barrister.

But apart from jurisprudence, which will be my life-work, I am interested in so many things, that to devote myself entirely to law seems a sin.

Yes, it is not my intention to do so. As a voluntary student I can attend lectures in the Faculty of Arts; books on all subjects are at my disposal. At twenty-two or twenty-three I shall finish the University, and then I want to travel. Travel all over the world, go everywhere, and not only observe,

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but learn. Even if this journey lasts five or eight years, it is all the same. I shall stay for a short time in whatever places appeal to me. And after that, made wise by life, with a reserve of energy, experience and knowledge, I shall return to my mother country, and devote myself to the work of serving others.

O God ! How good it is to think and write about this active and interesting future. If only dreams came true ! If only nothing occurs to prevent their realization.

The world-war may not finish . . . but no, by that time, everything will have gone back to normal conditions.

With the dreams of the future there are bound up many questions and doubts. . . .

I want to study in Russia. Perhaps, in other countries, teaching is placed on a higher pedestal, life is more interesting ; but all that is foreign, and I prefer to study in Moscow.

It seems to me that nothing can replace the Artistic Theatre. Perhaps it would be beautiful, splendid elsewhere, but I don't think it could be the same. Then, travelling about, I shall be able to attend lectures, but it is the Russian University I want.

How wonderfully the women students live in England ! They at once establish between themselves a friendly, healthy comradeship without cant or sentimentality.

But all the same I want to study in my own coun-

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try, to learn everything in my native tongue, though when I hear anybody spoken of as having finished his studies abroad, it seems to me a greater achievement than to have done so at a Russian University. It is true they teach better abroad, but, after all, it is only prejudice.

But on whose money shall I live while I am at the University? Obviously, it is more pleasant to live on one's own, but I think that while one is learning in college it is permissible to live on one's parents. A fixed allowance, of course, and no more. And travelling? Oh! That I want to do on my own, absolutely.

And all the same, in my diary, I am the most important figure. I am an egoist! But not a very dreadful one. . . .

28TH SEPTEMBER. It is already late, and I will only speak about my impressions on dancing. They are not very vivid. . . . Not with regard to the dances themselves, for they are jolly, but the "afterwards": which seemed to me rather boring. I am afraid that the boys were also bored and that the occasion did not impress them favourably.

I was expecting something big. But perhaps it will come, for we are only beginning to "make our bow to society."

The boys, I think, are "old hands," I only feel vexed that they seem to make a convenience of us, and that, once they have learned to dance without trouble, they will go. I would like to teach them a

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lesson, but I shall not know how to do it. That is so like a woman !

And I must admit that Sasha Donde behaved better than anybody else. When he likes he is most interesting, if only he did not put on airs. . . .

It should be gay, even apart from the dancing, but *that* I think was not the case.

29TH SEPTEMBER. In the plans of my future life, which does not seem to be cast on feminine lines, there should apparently be no place for love and such-like soft, tender and sentimental things, but it is not so at all.

I have written more than once that in my nature there lives a tendency towards that "other" world. And with all my longing for social work, and public activity, it hurts me to part from the beauty of life and the thought of love.

But what would happen if I never experienced love? For that can happen: not every one is fated to experience it. Yes . . . what if I never love? . . . Even now, when I am thinking of it, I feel disturbed. It hurts me. . . . Not to know what it is. . . . That wonderful splendid flame of life. . . . Love. . . . Can it be that this beautiful thing to which I feel drawn so unresistingly will not be accessible to me, and that only the grey workaday world will be mine? Oh, I am afraid of this, terribly afraid. . . .

One day when I was walking with Mother, she said, "When you marry." "But perhaps I shall

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not marry," I suggested shyly. "That may be," answered Mother calmly. It seemed to me as if something had been torn asunder in my heart, and it felt very bitter. Would the day come when I should have to kill all my aspirations towards love and limit my interests to books and public service? Oh, not that! Not that!

I do not know what love is, I cannot analyse it, but it is a wonderful exquisite feeling. . . . The most beautiful on earth.

How stupid are the people who mar this clear crystal..

Poor, poor people!

When I see a pair of lovers who at any rate seem pure, I am seized with emotion and want to go on looking at them. It does me good.

I do not know whether I have expressed my feelings well to-day. . . .

How beautiful is love! If it only came more quickly. . . . Rapture steals over me. . . . To love soon. . . . O God! . . .

Of course, it is ridiculous for me, a fifteen-year-old girl, to try and unravel these questions, but once they come into my head I shall speak about them.

What is occupying me considerably is the question whether I can, or rather whether I have the moral right to, *marry* (a disagreeable word). Naturally, this doubt only acquires significance if my plans mature and if I really show myself fitted for a public career.

The family, and children in particular, whose

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education is so incalculably important to the human race, represent a certain responsibility which takes up much time, and of that I shall have but little.

On the other hand, I do not want to fulfil these duties badly. The mother-instinct is very strong in me, and I think with delight that I shall have children, and of the way in which I shall bring them up. These musings form one of the chief patterns of my dreams.

1ST OCTOBER. I wondered whether I have the right to marry ; whether I must not sacrifice my personal happiness and devote myself entirely to the service of others ? But I have not solved this problem.

Of what are modern women often accused ? That having become "individuals" they have ceased to be women (in the right sense of the word), and that because of this they violate the laws of nature. So let us suppose that I become a woman, even an uncommon one as I hope, who will stand out from her environment, but, on the other hand, despise my womanly duties and renounce my family. Then they will be able to throw this reproach at me. . . . And supposing that not I alone but hundreds of women devote themselves to public work, neglecting their families in consequence. What will happen then ? Will this arrest the growth of the human race ?

No, I consider as an ideal of womanhood the woman who, while retaining her personality, even

as a social worker, remains feminine and conforms to what nature has decreed for her : who will not give up her family, because of her own life.

While I was writing another idea came to me. This is the ideal of a woman, is it possible to reach it at the present time? Must we not like day-labourers prepare the soil for it?

What is it, in fact, that I want to do? True, there is much that awaits me in the future : schools, homes for children, political work—all this is sufficient to fill life, but it is also possible to find time for the family. No, it is not only a right to have a family, but it is also a necessity for the destiny of woman, to prove that she is an equal and competent member of society.

In my dreams, however strange it may sound, I dream at the same time of children and of an independent life, which should be both comfortable and beautiful. The question of woman's fate interests me tremendously. This interest lives in me somehow fundamentally ; it is called forth neither by writing nor conversation, but has taken root in me of its own accord.

Is it necessary to add that I believe with all my heart and mind that women have absolutely equal rights with men, because I consider them in no wise their intellectual inferior?

This year I have added to the books on social subjects, some that are concerned with the feminist question, and I shall read them with great enjoyment.

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Of course, comparatively speaking, women have not asserted themselves up to now as capable individuals. There are many empty coquettes as well as spiritual nonentities among them, but, all the same, it is of note that now in all professions women appear who work on a level with men.

Are there also no empty-headed men? Oh, many! Do not men themselves encourage the defects of women by considering them only as amusing playthings? I speak, of course, in general. There are exceptions but, taken on an average, they are in the minority.

Does the education of woman prepare her for the serious tasks of life? The evil of this education is rooted far back in the centuries. Give women scope and opportunity, and they will be no worse than men.

I notice that these thoughts remind me of a book I once read, but all the same it seems to me that they come straight out of my soul.

Well! The one does no harm to the other.

Yes, woman must have all the rights, and in time she can earn them fully. At present we have still many women who are satisfied with their empty lives, but if we raise the standard, and improve the social conditions of life, which are connected with her, woman will also rise. Even now there are many among them who would be capable of leading a conscious existence successfully. Give them that possibility. When people criticize a woman in my presence, I never feel at ease, and I realize

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that they are wrong, but I have not the courage to dispute with them; I lack arguments and only mentally say to myself, "Wait!"

3RD OCTOBER. To-day I feel in the right mood to write and therefore take up my diary with pleasure.

Yesterday we received the enlargements of photographs of Grandfather and Grandmother, taken at the time when they were well and strong. They are not so much photographs as real pictures, wonderfully life-like. When you look at them something stabs your heart and you feel such pain. . . .

Can it be possible that all this is already in the past? Can it be that nothing remains? So, at different moments, the sense of loss acutely strikes one. . . . My God! Everything is past . . . they are no longer. . . . Thoughts involuntarily hark back to the summer, and it seems so near and so far. . . .

I remember separate episodes. Grandfather lying in the garden. . . . A clear sunny day, and he walks slowly to the couch, arm in arm with the nurse. I see him, I see him distinctly. . . . And there he is dead—in the coffin . . . crowds of people, singing, then the solemn funeral. All is ended. Nothing remains. . . . It has passed. How sharply one feels the loss!

It is impossible to conceive this. Grandfather is dead, Grandfather—*Dead*! On paper this does

3rd—13th October, 1918

not express the acute consciousness of it, which I feel so intensely.

13TH OCTOBER. Again I have not written for a long time. I wanted to finish reading my book "La Revolution Francaise," by Thiers, in order to begin a Russian one.

Mummie has gone away to the Crimea, with Sash-Ira, and will not return for some time. She must get better and have a thorough rest after the hardships of the last years, for she has become very nervous. It is quite impossible to recognize her ; she is not the same. She became nervous and irritable without any apparent cause, which unluckily often forced one to find her in the wrong. I discovered many small defects in Mummie of late. But, in spite of them, Mummie stands much above other people : she is most æsthetic and so much interested in everything. But she is not made for this rough materialistic life which we are forced to lead, a life in which one is always dealing with material problems; Mummie is accustomed to a different, a more quiet and secure existence. . . .

I often think now about L.A.L., he is nice, more than that—*very* interesting. I have never yet met any one like him, and wish we could know each other, and that he would like me. . . . Yes, I do wish this. I look forward to meeting him at the University. . . . He is very good, refined. It would be nice if some of my partners at the

Kieff

dances were like him. There's nothing in them except the dancing. It is true that I do not know them very well, but there it is.

14TH OCTOBER. Peace is near. Germany has agreed to Wilson's conditions ; among them that of evacuating the occupied territory. They will call an International Conference. . . . And then . . . and then. . . . There somewhere on the horizon, far off, the dawn of a new life indistinctly appears. It seems as if we were not only going to live through the Revolution, but to outlive it. What will happen to Russia? Of course this question will be one of the chief ones at the Conference. But what will be their attitude towards it? Will they take advantage of their strength to revenge themselves on us for the Brest-Litovsk Treaty? I want to believe that they will not do so. If their words are not lies, they must act honourably.

And so let us suppose that Russia is untouched, and that we can dispose of ourselves as we like.

I think that the most probable arrangement will be a Federative Union. But it seems to me that order cannot be re-established at once : the waves of popular passion are still running too high. Riots, etc., will continue for some time to come, but, all the same, pacification is far nearer than it was.

What will the Government be like? I think that they ought only to elect a Democratic Republic.

Oh, Good God ! Is it possible that we shall ever

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again enjoy peace and quietness? That life will continue in the old grooves? Now that I am older, how much better I shall be able to profit by it. Then . . . to travel. The immeasurable ocean, the mountains, the boundless green plains, Paris, London. . . . Nature. . . . People. . . . How all this entices one, calls to one. . . . But before that, the University in Moscow, the Artistic Theatre, the Museums. . . . How all this attracts me! . . .

And, even if I should fall in love and meet with no response, my life will not suffer from this. I shall arrange it, so as not to depend on love, let alone wait for it as so many girls do. I shall live. If love comes I shall take it; and if not, I shall regret it, wildly regret it, but I *shall* live all the same.

I see in my imagination a small flat, furnished with exquisite comfort. . . . Beauty everywhere, softness, cosiness. And I am the mistress of it—a woman and a personality at the same time. I live an interesting life: writers, artists, painters forgather at my house, a really interesting circle, a close, friendly community. I know no picture more attractive than this. I am free, independent. In these surroundings, in which there is even no place for it, I shall not regret love. Life is full without it. It is only the dawn of love which I should miss . . . those moments, the memory of which beautifies all the life of man.

When I see the tenderness of people who are in

love, I feel the warm sensation of being in the presence of something beautiful, truly beautiful. I have such a pleasant feeling. And I would like to watch them, watch them without an end. . . . There is something else that is strange. I see children in my imagination and think with joy about them. The husband is a figure that has never appeared in my fancies, quite a stranger in fact ; I have never once thought about him.

On one side I see my little home—on the other I think with delight of my children.

Evening. I am deeply introspective. . . . I have been reading the stories of Boborykin. Quite passable ; some are not at all bad. They stirred many thoughts in me. There is so much sorrow and poverty, both moral and physical, in the world. How many people are doomed, how many girls perish or drag a miserable existence.

I shall be told, this is life, this is an inevitable evil, which must not be allowed to poison your outlook. . . . That may be so, but does this mean that it will be left unpunished ? Socialism, equality, brotherhood—these are the radiant summits of culture and humanity, but it seems to me that the chief problem consists in giving all these poor people immediate material help.

And prostitution ? That is the greatest evil, the nightmare of civilization. How can one tolerate it ? What disgrace for the women. . . . What depravity ! To exterminate it is one of the prin-

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cial duties of those who fight the battles of humanity, and of women in particular.

How often these "fallen" women are innocent, how often they fall through ignorance, how often they are driven to it by the menace of death from hunger ! What darkness !

And, after all, it only rests with people to do away with all this degradation and ignorance, but they obstinately refuse to do so. It is only separate individuals who struggle on for the pure ideas of culture.

20TH OCTOBER. To-morrow we go to the "Chauve Souris," which means that I shall experience a feeling of profound artistic joy.

It is a long time since I was in such a frame of mind as I am in to-day. It . . . no, I can't define it, it will only waste time. I feel more than ever the emptiness of the life of those by whom I am surrounded and my alienation from them all. There is little, practically nothing, in common between us, and Father is becoming a stranger, which is very unpleasant. But this is far from being all I feel to-day. It is only a part. The other, I don't know how to explain. My mood is calm, but shrouded in sadness, in tranquillity. In silence.

I think about L.A. I often think of him. I have met no other men as refined, as intellectual as he is. But I know him so little. What does he think of me ? How far I feel from all my people !

Kieff

Even from Nina. That is why I was so apathetic when I was with her to-day ; we had no mutual interests. Bluntness, indifference.

Perhaps it is the autumn which makes me feel like this. I do not know. I walked for a whole hour alone in the garden. It is so peculiar there. Though there are comparatively many people, it is generally quiet. The trees stand there, sad and gentle. . . . No, it is not even sadness, but complete calm. A peace that is not depression.

Do you know in books there are people who become like this after a great misfortune. . . . Lisa, Lisa Kalitin in the "House of Gentlefolk." They can be quite gay, but sadness floats around them. Yes, that is quite like Lisa.

There is but little green, the tints are mostly yellow. In places one cannot see the earth at all ; even the air seems yellowish. And round you it is so peaceful, so pleasant. You come to the Dniepr. The horizon is somewhere far off. . . . Everything is soaked in a grey-blue mist, and this matches the foliage and the mood which has descended upon you from the autumn garden.

One can watch the river move and a small boat flash down stream on the current. . . . One feels the immensity of the world. All is so calm : people with all their passions become infinitely remote. Peace, quiet, rest. . . . What can be better, more beautiful than nature ? Her eternal peace, her everlasting calm are infinitely important to us. This is not "cold indifference," oh no !

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In sorrow, in sadness or in too wild joy, nothing is more soothing, more profound than nature. She gives to man's exhausted soul a deep, deep repose.

I love to stand at the edge of an abyss, at the very edge, so that a single movement, and . . . to-day, stepping close to the brink of a precipice, although not so deep as I should have wished, the thought came into my mind that some day I should die thus, crashing headlong into the chasm. . . .

My walk to-day has evoked this premonition. . . . But I feel it more now, after the walk, than during it. . . .

21ST OCTOBER. I felt so happy, so light-hearted and now Yura has spoiled it. How vexatious. . . .

I walked there again and it was wonderful. I shall go there every day after school, but unluckily not by myself, I shall have to take Yura.¹ What a pity! It is so delightful to walk alone. I feel re-born, so free . . . with him it won't be the same.

I stood near my precipice again and opened my coat and filled my lungs with air. The wind blew in my face . . . and it was good, so good. Whereas if I am not alone . . . now for something funny, and pleasant and nice. . . . This is it: an officer was following me the whole time. Fie, it looks horrid on paper, and in reality it was not

¹ Her brother.

like that at all. There was no question of his being importunate. He remained at a distance, but followed me. And it seemed so delicious that somebody should be interested in me. I think I shall still meet him, always, every day. Perhaps this is foolishness, and yet. . . .

My dear diary, how I longed for you to-day. I love you, I write with delight. It is so wonderful to walk by oneself . . . what a pity. Now it will be plain, dull walks. It is impossible not to take Yura, he must go out. Enough of this.

I do not long for Mummie, but I should awfully like to know how she is and what is happening to her. There is not enough news, and everything feels empty. This morning I received a letter, a little piece of Mummie has arrived, and I am so pleased. What else do I expect from her? I do not know.

"I do not know where . . ." says the "Dryad of the Bois de Boulogne." I cannot picture Mummie to myself. Neither her face nor her innermost being. That is why I do not know what I want. But I want news, and when I do not get it for a long time I feel disturbed. Thank heaven, Mummie has settled there quite comfortably and her health is improving. . . . No, there is no need at all to cry. . . .

I looked at the Dniepr, its thick blue colour, and tried to imagine the Black Sea, Simeiz, and her there. . . .

Yesterday evening at the "Chauve Souris"

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made me imagine something like this : the performance had finished. The band began to play. Here and there tea and fruit made their appearance, and I imagined a noisy elegant saloon filled with a great crowd. We sit at a separate table, we, that is I and other people. . . . I am a grown-up young lady, about the others I know nothing except that they are interesting. Round us there is gaiety, a gaiety that intoxicates and goes to the head. Music, champagne. Animated conversation, shrill voices . . . and my spirits rise accordingly. . . .

Isn't this jolly? Isn't this wonderful? Not only gay, but thrilling, exciting. Isn't it? It's lovely !

Such a life would not do for every day; just for sometimes. It was only a vision. I clearly saw it right before my eyes. The milieu inspired me. . . . Will this ever be or not? Yes, or no?

Oh, how I should like to try a crazy, passionate kind of life. I want to plunge into this whirlpool. But why?

No, I shall not be able to define it any better. Especially to-day. A whirlpool of diversion, of light, empty-headed society life; such suppers, conversations and what else? . . . flirt perhaps? No, it is a nasty word. Rubbish, somewhat like the word love. But all the same it would be interesting, sweeping you off your feet by its excitement.

25TH OCTOBER. In these days when I wanted to

write, I felt lonely . . . everything and everybody seemed so strange and distant ; it was hard to be alone. . . . I made M.A. sit down near me ; she is kind and nice, but insignificant. No, it is not right to say insignificant, THERE ARE NO INSIGNIFICANT PEOPLE ; EACH ONE OF US HAS HIS SOUL, AND MAN'S SOUL BY ITSELF IS GREAT.

I must not talk like this, yet I cannot but feel my intellectual superiority over her. What she only feels, that I both feel and *understand*. . . . It is not nice ! I am a conceited prig. But it is true all the same, and in spite of it, I just caught myself on the verge of pouring out my soul to her. . . . I wanted to write my diary, but I had to read, so I read.

This year I want to read Tchehov, Tolstoy and Merejkovski. The rest, unfortunately, will only be "in between."

I do not remember word for word, but Belinsky has said approximately the following : "to love once is not a merit, and to love many times is not a crime, but it is equally ridiculous to boast about the first and condemn the second." I do not quote this as an authority, but only as a confirmation of the thought, which has been wandering in my head, and now has taken shape. I came across this utterance of Belinsky and felt happy.

My thought frightened me a little by its temerity, as it seemed to me. Now I no longer find it particularly bold. Wait, as I am writing it has developed much further and more fully.

I should like to discuss this with some one, but

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there is nobody. I could only speak about this with Raia or Talia, so that I shall have to keep it to myself until Mummie's arrival. And then probably I shall tell Mummie, in order to learn what she thinks, and through her impressions what others think about it.

Why must man love only once, or let us say, not love any more from the time when he "enters the state of matrimony"? Why are all natural movements of the heart forbidden to him? Is this not one of the forms of slavery? Terrible, because it is a moral one.

I have met a man. For one reason or another I passionately fall in love with him. He completely fills my being. I am happy. Time passes, I meet another one; cannot the sacred flame of love flare up in my heart once more? Life answers "yes." At every step we see love, which repeats itself, but often man is branded with disgrace and condemned to everlasting scorn because his soul responds to beauty. For is not the one who is loved always beautiful to the one who loves him? It ought to be permissible for man to love freely, as many times as he wishes.

Do you know? An idea has crossed my mind, that if I am given the choice of an essay for my home work I shall take this subject. It interests me, but it might cause unpleasantness, so I do not think I shall decide without consulting Mummie. Meanwhile I shall postpone it; if she approves, there will be time enough.

Kieff

I am no good at proving my point, and what I write will probably not convince any one the tiniest bit, even less than that, no one will think twice about it.

And Anna Karenina? I respect her as a human being, I do not consider her as a criminal, rather as a victim to our contemporary morality.

Marriage is slavery, it prevents one from surrendering oneself to that supreme happiness which the initiated call love—and so I think it is. Human personality must develop quite freely. Marriage impedes this development; even more than that, it often drives one to “moral crimes,” not only because forbidden fruit is sweet, but because the new love, which could be perfectly legitimate, becomes a crime. Would man and woman be less happy if they lived together without being married, simply as “lovers”?—possibly not even in the same house, but meeting every day; in short, leading the life of a regularly married couple. If they love one another, what can hinder them from settling down together? I should like to talk this over with Aunt Aniouta. . . . I must think about it.

26TH OCTOBER. We danced, as we usually do on Saturdays, some badly, some well. . . . When I whirl to the swinging rhythm of the waltz, somehow I begin to feel happy . . . and I want to spin round like this without an end. No other words

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than these are needed to depict my feelings during the waltz.

27TH OCTOBER. I went to a matinee, "The Heir Presumptive,"¹ pretty, tender and poetical. There is no real depth, no depth of thought in the subject. These feelings are familiar, easy to understand, they carry you away, but this play cannot be considered as profound, it appeals to the imagination, but no more. As a general impression it is very delightful. The acting was comparatively good, really quite good.

YOUTH! How splendid it is! How vibrant with life! To profit by every moment, so that none should be lost! Life! To feel all my nerves tingling. . . . To live fully, to live with interest. . . . I shall finish at the University . . . and afterwards I shall travel for a long time and go everywhere. This nomad existence is so engrossing, there are so many new people, so many new places. Then I shall return. I want my own circle of friends, intimate, interesting. Then . . . some time . . . death—cold and quiet.

How lyrical I have become all of a sudden. And life when one looks round is such an empty and stupid farce, and everything evaporates when one uses the "words of common sense."

Yes, "The Heir Presumptive" is a pretty thing, simple, romantic.

¹ "Alt Heidelberg."

Kieff

Poor, poor prince ! There are many people who deep down in their hearts have buried their sorrowful memories, who have deep down in them a sad little corner of their own—a burial place. . . . The impression that all this has left is one of melancholy.

31ST OCTOBER. You think that I do not want to write ? I do—passionately : I have no time, I must read. . . . Already I have read “What the swallow sang.” Good for the heart, but not for the mind. . . .

1ST NOVEMBER. What delight there is in poetry. Before, I was in a desperate mood and now, I feel free, quiet, happy. . . .

There is so much unpleasantness here. During the day I felt quite upset. It got so uncomfortable. I wanted love, tender caresses, I wanted Mummie. And they all are so cold, so distant. . . . That is since yesterday.

The question of earning money has already presented itself to me, but I had not the strength to decide it, that is to say, I was unable to find a solution.

I wrote some days ago about “free love”. . . . Yes, man can have as many loves as his heart can hold. It is impossible to confine love. It is boundless. One person is made one way and one another. The one is content with loving more ; the other cannot content himself with this.

27th October—1st November, 1918

However, as I write it seems to me I see before me the vision of a woman who is changeable in her affections and a protest seems to rise in me against this. But enough of this subject.

I see, I feel the endless sequence of the centuries like a vast boundless space. In it the sun, the planets, and our earth. Small among the greater worlds. Large in comparison with the smaller ones.

First the empty earth—then the tertiary and other epochs, whose names I do not know. Then the animal turns into the savage ; the savage becomes a cultured man, who builds cities, founds monarchies.

Out of the darkness of the ages Assyria, Babylon, Greece look down upon me and, at last Rome—the great Eternal City, which enslaved the world, carrying on war with other kingdoms, Rome—the Empress and Mistress of them all.

And in this enormous organism of the Life of History, every monarchy, every man, lives his own full life, each fills his own horizon. His life to him is a whole world of greatness and importance. Man does not pause to reflect on the fate of humanity. His past, his present, his future are Rome to him. But the trend of History continues—the Eternal City has fallen. As compared to the history of the world it lasted but a moment. Instead of the perfect flowering of civilization with all its rich culture—complete destruction.

A summer's day is followed by deep night. But

Kieff

after the night comes the day again. A new era : our centuries.

The same towns, the same culture, the same wars, and the same man entirely absorbed by his short life and limited by his narrow outlook.

The great slaughter has come, the great slaughter of the Nations, when everything is forgotten except the lust for blood. Men are drunk on it. They devise sacred watchwords—but massacre remains massacre and war remains war. There is no quiet refuge left on earth ; the old normal life has ceased everywhere, and people only remember it as in a dream.

Is not this the sunset of our times ? Is not this the beginning of a new life ? Is not man entering on a new road in History ? What will happen later ? A hundred, two hundred, three hundred years hence ?

Ah, even though the past is known to us and we can see what man has been through—yet we cannot look into the future.

Man, who peers into the mists that lie ahead, can only assume one thing : that—as in the past—generations will follow generations, kingdoms will follow kingdoms. In their place, in time others will arise. But man will remain obsessed by his private life, and the earth, though but a pigmy amongst other worlds, will go on appearing to him as *the* world. In the limitless space of Creation the sun will go on shining and the planets revolving. . . .

1st-3rd November, 1918

I have written these lines with such excitement that I feel feverish and my cheeks are burning. . . .

* * * * *

With what interest I read all this again 29/VI.19.
(In Nelly's handwriting.)

Whilst I have been writing, something has come into my head, which up to now had never entered my thoughts. The old antique world of Greece and Rome was not the vestibule to our times, like the approach to a mountain beyond which there is nowhere to go. Their culture stood as high as ours ; they reached everything which Man in our times has re-created after a long period of destruction. They had gone as far on the road to civilization as we have. They are the self-same Twentieth Century, but from the other end of the history of the world. They *were*, they reigned, and they have passed. . . . We *are*, we shall reign, we shall pass. . . .

3RD NOVEMBER. I took, or rather they gave me in the library, the book of Avseyenko, *Letters about Women*. I don't know whether it is good or bad, but it touches deeply upon different problems and I am reading it slowly in consequence. I have to stop often and to take notes.

I have not yet spoken about this. Yes, I read and make note of expressions ; thoughts which the book has called up in me. Of course, not in the book itself, but in a special copy book. My

Kieff

Moscow teacher, A.K., gave me this advice. What a master he was ! It was a joy to work under him.

I have taken a second book : Leo Tolstoy's *Sebastopol*. When I get tired of the one I pick up the other, and vice versa.

What a pity it is that the first copy books of my Diary are still in Moscow. Shall I get them back or not, and when ? It would be so pleasant to sit down to read them. . . . Our former life, the well-known faces, stand up before my eyes, as if they were alive. The former life ! . . . This life in Saratoff which was not so long ago, but so much has changed round us that it seems some distant dream.

And the longing for home, the warm familiar environment, has been so strong in me these last days, that I gladly went yesterday evening to Aunt Rose to rest from the chilly atmosphere in our house. And my visit to her warmed me considerably.

What a happy life I had in Saratoff. How nicely everything was arranged.

A few days ago I had to go to a certain house. I rang the bell and entered the hall. A wide hall, with costly furniture, elegance, comfort . . . the true setting of a home. And can you imagine it ? I felt so unhappy, something wrenched at my heart, for that is the way we used to live, we too were accustomed to such surroundings. And now ? I felt deeply troubled. Not on account of the opulence before my eyes, but because of its

3rd-5th November, 1918

air of *chez soi*, the resemblance of the furniture to ours which also reminded me of home. Here we have no home . . . we are all separated. . . . It is cold. . . . One feels the icy blast of discomfort and one's soul shrivels under it. . . . Perhaps when Mummie returns it will change. Mummie ! At such moments I often think of her. But I simply cannot recall her face.

5TH NOVEMBER. To-day I did not even pick up a book. I finished my lessons and came straight to my diary.

It is cold, very cold in our flat. This is easy to explain—we are all strangers to one another, and each one has his own life. Each one until now had nothing in common with the others, and now it is only because of these strange times that we have to live together.

Individually, each of us has not got Mummie, so that we feel quite strange towards one another. When she returns we shall not feel this so strongly, because she keeps *our* family together. It is a state of affairs which at times is hard to bear. . . . Sometimes I reflect with horror that when I am grown up I shall be just an ordinary young girl, with a simple, grey little life, so that in the end there won't be any difference between me and other people : that all my dreams and feelings are only the ferment of youth. Deep pain comes over me and something tightens in my heart. "Am I really but one of the crowd ?" I ask myself despair-

ingly. "Just that" is the sad answer. No, I do not want that, it must not be.

My small world belongs to me, it is my own, it is deeply individual. I cannot believe that I do not stand above the crowd, for I have always looked upon myself as superior to it. I thought that I stood apart, that there is much that is exclusively my own and foreign to others.

But my dreams, my hopes of a future life? Must they all turn to dust? Am I like everybody else? That is what I often ask myself. "Only one of the great mass?" Oh, Future! Tell me what thou wilt bring me? Shall my dreams be realized, or not? Shall I go under or rise to the surface? Oh Time, Time, would that it passed quicker! On the whole there is not long to wait—a year, two. . . . School will be over, a more conscious life will begin. What will be Time's verdict?

Once I spoke to Nina. "I think your nature is more complex than mine," she said. And this gave me deep pleasure.

When one hears this from others one is more ready to believe that this may be, than when one only thinks oneself that it is so.

This deep faith in myself, in my nature being different from that of others, seems to have grown with me. I do not think about this all the time, it does not guide my actions, and sometimes I am pricked by a doubt whether this is really the case. But when I begin to discuss the future, the conviction that I am right somehow imposes itself

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involuntarily upon me. My certainty is strengthened and I then believe in myself and in my plans.

. . . My decision was made long ago. For a long time past my feelings and my thoughts have inclined towards Socialism. I do not know when this happened, or how it came about. My convictions have been formed for some time past, not with regard to everything, but on certain questions.

I condemned free love, as a child, who has grown up in strict uprightness and purity, would condemn every kind of uncleanness. I venerated the great ones of the earth ; and of course in the first place I adored the Emperor. If a Minister was expected in Saratoff I went mad with excitement.

. . . And other things of the same kind. So, gradually, my horizon widened, I learned to understand what I had condemned before. (This does not refer to Socialism which I have always upheld.) Gradually I learned to look upon those in authority, and even the Emperor, as simple mortals : this is too abstract, I must get closer to the subject.

I consider myself a Socialist, and hope that when I grow up, I shall really become one. In the meantime . . . of what does my Socialism consist ? In my views on the form of government, on the situation of the working classes, on the question of political equality. Yes, of course, the Socialists are in the right. There is no doubt in my mind as regards this.

There must not be the abyss which exists at

present between the rich and the poor. All must possess sufficient material independence to be able to have their share of higher spiritual pleasures. Is the poverty of the workers, the starvation of their children and the revolting dependence of one class upon the other not horrible, when all have received from nature an equal right to existence and the enjoyment of the gifts of life?

9TH NOVEMBER. To-day is Saturday, we have been dancing. It is late but I want to write a few lines. . . .

I dance far from well ; in fact, rather badly. But I love the waltz. . . . It is so delightful to feel oneself floating round, though one makes mistakes, and with the music playing it is so easy to forget everything, and get all one's steps mixed up. Your head begins to whirl, but in spite of this it is enchanting. . . . But all this pleasure is due to the dancing, not to society. Society is quite different. Our milieu is homely, simple and rather dull. There is no vestige of what I dreamt. There is no youthful gaiety, no infectious buoyant atmosphere . . . no airy flirtations, is that it? All this only exists in dreams.

Whether it comes true or not, to dream is delicious and I dream. But this is not the essence of dancing. *That* is different : sweet and bitter at the same time. . . . To feel that you are worse than the others, less attractive than they (not in looks but altogether ; when in society) ; that, while passion-

5th—11th November, 1918

ately wishing to feel and to live, you remain on one side, alone. . . . This is what hurts, and sometimes quite badly too. The first reason is that I am not graceful enough when I dance. . . .

Tell me, shall I experience love, and when? Or can it be that I shall never do so?

11TH NOVEMBER. . . . I am reading *Les Misérables*, by Hugo. Two more volumes and I shall have finished. It is a joy to dwell on the deep beauty of Victor Hugo's style. "In the days of irresolution and anxious perplexity," I turn to Nature as my only comfort, for there is nothing that has such a soothing effect on the soul, especially on mine.

This morning I felt empty and cold—I went out for a walk and turned into the Imperial Gardens. As soon as I passed in under the leafless boughs, leaving behind me the noise and bustle of the town, I felt lighter hearted and I wanted to sing and run about. High up there, on the slopes of the steel-blue Dniepr, under the bright rays of the sun, it seems to me as though wings were springing from my shoulders, and a deep quiet feeling of content takes possession of me. I feel calm and happy. I sit down and gaze in front of me, and my thoughts float away into the blue distance. What are they about? I do not know. Neither vivid dreams of the future, nor the burning topics of the day.

I think confusedly of the boundless spaces of the earth, and their quiet and peace. In my imagina-

tion I see distant seas and towering mountains. Or I look at the Dniepr and feel unspeakably content. Why should I go back to the busy life of everyday? To what purpose? What is in it?

Everything is superfluous, everything trivial and insignificant before the eternal world . . . and with revived courage I return home, radiantly happy.

14TH NOVEMBER. This is what happened to-day. I have already remarked several times in my diary that Yura spoils my temper. At moments he is rude and cannot restrain himself. His rudeness has a disastrous effect upon me and kills my kind words, my friendly intentions. I become cold as ice, I know it. I put on an armour of coldness and indifference, which is more than repellent. What can I do? I am afraid all the time that I am not acting well or conscientiously. And fearing this, every time I begin again to speak affectionately to him, paying no attention to his outbursts ; and this goes on without an end.

I have also noticed another thing : I am still too young and inexperienced, and, goaded into irritation by his manner towards me, I invariably strike the wrong note. It is not my duty to train him, but Mummie is not here, there is no one to direct him and I must do all I can to make up for her absence by my tenderness. . . . And try not to lose my temper. . . . I must take myself in hand. Be stronger. To-morrow I shall try again. . . ,

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15TH NOVEMBER. What a lovely thing it is to read. One is transported into quite a different world. What feelings, what emotions, what enlightenment come to you in reading ! What a deep satisfaction it gives.

17TH NOVEMBER (Sunday). You wake up in the morning, not having yet weaned yourself from sleep, and already in your mind there dawns the sweet consciousness that it is a holiday : you need not go to school and the day is free and your own to do with as you please. . Delightful ! I at once picked up a book. Finished it. One more volume and I shall have concluded *Les Misérables*. Then I drove to the cemetery with Raya. I have not yet risked driving there alone and shall not do so ; the usual family row would be sure to follow.

At the cemetery it was grey and bleak. Near our graves a requiem was being held. I. E. Kashuk was there, whose thirteen-year-old son died two weeks ago from Spanish Influenza. . . . It is a horror. . . . It is still more horrible when a child dies, a young child who has not yet had time to live.

The wings of Death beat over your head as soon as you enter the graveyard. . . . One leaves the noisy, restless life far, far behind, and people appear superfluous. To sit alone near beloved tombs—that is what one wishes to do there. In one's heart, emptiness. Not to think, not to grieve, only to sit still, motionless. . . . The consciousness that

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they have gone for ever takes possession of your whole being. Memories float back. Oh, these moments of an enlightened consciousness of death. . . . One's soul empties itself : here is the kingdom of Death. . . .

They are no more ! The time is not far distant when Grandfather and Grannie were both alive and well. They were living, human beings. And now—nothing. Inanimate, empty bodies. And even those under the sod. There is nothing, nothing remains. Their earthly course is run. They are dust and ashes. Their names are erased from the face of the earth ; except the imprint left by their activities, the remembrance of them—there is nothing . . . they came and they went.

In the unending ranks of people, from time immemorial to the mists that shroud the future, there appeared two shadows. Now they are no more. They emerged in vague outlines and then disappeared. . . . And life, without paying heed to their disappearance, pulsates and ferments, as if they had never been. What does it care ? Will the weather change because two small white clouds have floated onwards in the expanse of blue sky ?

They are no more, we grieve, but we live as we lived, it is natural, but it is curious, infinitely mysterious and great as is all that comes from nature.

. . . I remember the day of Grannie's death : I was returning through the fields, making plans for the following day, and saw Nina coming

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towards me. She called out "Nelly." And I understood. I understood that all was over.

I looked round . . . everything went on without the slightest change : in the distance a peasant was mowing ; the field remained a field, the sky the same sky ; nothing responded to the disappearance of another living being. . . .

Death and life are two inseparable brothers, the two fundamentals of existence.

Man was a reasonable and powerful being. He dies. . . . Nothing. Ashes, dust, emptiness. With death comes the end of everything. And this "nothing" is the termination of all human passions, experiences. . . .

Small and insignificant, he is given a short span: "live !" After that he must disappear. The time has passed. Make the most of your life, poor little man ; do not waste it, it will soon go, take all that you can. Be happy.

Little, little people. . . . In front of you there is death. Everywhere, invincible, inevitable black death. Man feels, loves, lives and then—it is finished ! Terrible death that paralyses the vital forces. Whatever happens—the end is one. And our turn will come. And we too shall disappear into the maw of the centuries.

And also I shall die. One by one we shall descend under the "eternal vaults". . . . What if we sit down and wait, do nothing and only wait ? . . . No, the force of life is so strong in man, that, knowing about death, seeing it at every step, all the

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same he lives with all his strength and forgets about it.

It is thy good fortune, man. . . .

People die. One after the other they leave the highway of life. Puny atoms, after they have made a little noise, shouted a little, worked a little, shivered through their existences, they depart. For them it is the end. *But life does not end.* . . . Others come in their stead, they continue the work that is begun, and they also die.

In the mist of coming centuries it is the same picture. People live and die. Life will become purer, better, but nevertheless, people will live and die.

No, thou art not quite insignificant—Man ! thou art the kernel of humanity ; of immortal humanity. Thou wilt depart but life is not ended. Man is not alone. He is the link of a general chain. The links change, but the chain remains. Life is immortal. In this lies the future. Permeate thyself with this thought, oh man, and do not despair ! . . .

18TH NOVEMBER. The shooting of the students is revolting, revolting in the highest degree.

19TH NOVEMBER. Pride is indispensable to man. Man without a pride is a rag. It helps him to preserve his dignity, often protects his honour, and when it is rationally directed, brings him out of the storms of life.

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But there is a mistaken pride, which is vanity, and this is superfluous. I shall say a few words to-day about the latter. It is on this account that I have taken up my diary, otherwise I should read the *Villa on the Rhine*, by Auerbach.

I am proud, but it seems to me that it is a good pride. I like to depend on myself, and not on other people. I am—how shall I put it?—honest and am aware of it. I am proud of that “self” which lies in me, as it does in every reasonable being. My principal characteristic is, I repeat it, a dislike of asking favours, and the pleasure of achieving my object without assistance or help from any one.

Should not every one have this pride? For some time past, for instance, we have had no pocket handkerchiefs; I always wash the same one in the evening, and yet there is a laundress as well as other servants in the house. . . . But this is what happens independently of my will. My first impulse is to wash it myself and not to ask others to do it for me.

Some ten days ago the thought entered my head that this is a form of pride, and that it is good and reasonable. . . .

To-day, on returning from the Gymnasium, I found in our room a parcel of fruit. “Who bought this?” I asked. “Raya.” “Why did she?” It is just like giving alms to poor relations,” was my first irritable thought, and I nearly gave utterance to it, but at the same time another thought sobered

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me. "Was that her intention? She wanted to show some kindness, some thoughtfulness," and I added with a deep sigh, bent on self-deception, "It is very sweet of her. . . ." I conquered myself. I remembered Turgenev's "Beggar" in *Poems in Prose* and realized her high-mindedness and integrity, which before I had not appreciated sufficiently.

Such pride is uncalled for and unjust. People meet you with good-will; why should one offend them with refusal?

20TH NOVEMBER. There are days, when I feel myself to be particularly a stranger; when with all my being I want caresses, tenderness, love, at least some semblance of a home. I then think of Mummie with anguish and I would like to "save" myself by going to Aunt Rose.

21ST NOVEMBER. To-day we danced. We had thought of arranging dances twice a week, but they didn't come to anything; we shan't try it any more. Yet it was gay. . . . It is the first time that I have thoroughly enjoyed myself. Why? I do not know. The environment which made one feel inclined for enjoyment, or the intimate atmosphere? And when we had once begun it went with a swing. You chatter all the time all kinds of nonsense, but it is amusing. I don't dance particularly well, but all the same it is delightful. I have decided to go to the first school dance

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and to show myself off as a dancer ! I am going to have a good time. Dancing is a splendid thing. . . . Dancing and skating, one need never be dull with these.

There I become entirely different from what I am at home, even from what I am in the streets, I chatter without a pause, gaily and freely. I laugh and even my light-heartedness is different, both simple and genuine.

They all, especially Lange, think there isn't much in me. Let them think so. They need not see more than what I show them ; my inner "ego" is foreign and incomprehensible to them. Those who are familiar with it will discover and understand it. One feels instinctively to whom one can disclose one's inner self.

Something else happened to-day. A wire from Mummie, to say that she will return if Father does not join her. No one knew what I felt about this telegram : besides even to myself this feeling proved an unexpected revelation : I was surprised that it should be so strong.

I have missed caresses, love and warmth for such a long time, and I have shrivelled up during Mummie's absence : nevertheless, I did not expect that I should rejoice so much at the chance of her coming.

Yes, I should be glad, but above all things, I want Dearest to be in good health and if possible happy. That is why I did not show my feelings.

. . . And this capacity to control myself at the

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bidding of a higher impulse deeply satisfied me. . . . Yes, I should be very, very glad if Dearest came back.

22ND NOVEMBER. Life in this environment weighs more and more often upon me and to such an extent that I feel it with pain and bitterness.

24TH NOVEMBER (Sunday). As usual I have been reading. Twice to-day I have felt a strange uneasiness. In the morning I went for a walk, but even in the street I felt estranged from the people round me. Thoughts whose object I cannot even define oppressed me. I do not remember what effect they produced on my mind . . . only there was no connection with those I met ; more, a sort of wall seemed to have risen between them and myself.

This state of mind is extraordinary and inexplicable. The inner world has thrust out the outer one. The first time this happened was after reading for two hours ; I finished the first volume. I did not want to go on. And again some inner feeling filled me to such an extent that I was unable to do anything else—even to write in my diary.

How lovely it would be to roam about alone, to feel the breath of the world and to listen to the silence, then to read, to hark back to ancient times,

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plunge into the study of scientific questions or to soar in my "Azure Kingdom." . . . Yes, a wonderful vision !

Everything in it is alluring . . . but it seems rather amusing to represent myself as a fifteen-year-old girl, living the quiet, contemplative life of some mediæval hermit.

Nevertheless, I feel sufficient strength as well as a great desire to lead a life such as this.

To-day I was thinking about it. Though it is one-sided, such a life presents many attractions. I imagined a man who has spent his whole life in this fashion. ALL HIS LIFE ! Even admitting he has gained much knowledge, meditated deeply, penetrated into the fundamentals of all things—yet what has he given life ? Nothing. He is remote from it, he is a parasite ; splendid, full of value,—yet, a parasite.

I must go, I have thought a great deal to-day and could write all through the night. . . . All I have left out lately is clamouring for utterance to-day. Will it repeat itself ? A pity, a pity, a pity. . . .

26TH NOVEMBER. Mummie darling. It is so empty and so heavy. . . . For want of something better I think of my friends in Luther Street, of Ira, she understands. . . . Yet when I am with her, I am silent. Dearest, take me into your arms and fondle me. . . .

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28TH NOVEMBER. There is no family. There is no love. There is coldness, emptiness, stupidity and heaviness of heart. I am wretched, very wretched.

I think that I should feel easier if Mummie were here, even if I were not quite happy.

Uncle, Father, we two, Raya and Aunt Eva, are all living in one flat, and what good can come of that? The disparity between us is felt especially when we are at table. At moments the lack of a homely atmosphere is acute. At Aunt Rose's it is different, though they are numerous, yet they are *one* family. . . . If only Mummie were here. I am not sure, but it has seemed to me lately that she will arrive soon. Unexpectedly. This is because I am longing for her arrival. Without her I seem to shrivel up, to retire within myself. We all wait with impatience for Mummie and are all silent about it, except Father who sometimes makes a slip; but neither Yura nor myself ever mention it. This is pride. A good pride, for it is not people's business to know of my sorrows and my sadness. One must be able to conquer them in oneself.

Am I in a particularly heavy mood to-day? No, it is always thus. I hide my feelings, but at the slightest provocation they break out.

What is there to do? It is a period of transition! Be strong. Be firm, be resolute. I try to succeed, but sometimes fail. Defeat is often unavoidable. But when I do not act as I should, I feel it and this

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is well. To-day this happened, but I corrected myself, and returned to the right road.

After supper, we had a quarrel about the lamp. It had to be brought in, and as I did not want to fuss, I went and fetched it. . . . There, in the dark room, tears rose to my eyes and I did not hold them back : I thought : Yura will come. He will see and then ? I don't know for certain, but I think this was affectation and therefore a lie, and wrong.

I have put down to-day two ugly little traits of mine. I have made my confession. You are my conscience, dear diary. It is right to confess one's failings and mistakes. Then, Nelly, you will be a brick.

I shall read now for a little, to give thoughts a rest and then write again. . . .

. . . Lately I have become more and more certain that I do not care much for Father. A quiet feeling of tenderness for him appears but rarely. Does he love me ? He loves me like every father—in a tepid sort of way. We are too different. He loves me, does not love me. In any case there is no spiritual kinship, but complete indifference. When Mother is with us this is smoothed away, without her it comes out more strongly, and that is why there is such coldness in the house, why there is no unity, no cosiness.

Mummie. . . . She has also much that is . . . I shall not say negative, that would be more than I

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mean, but not so very positive. But there is much that is fine, profound, pure, and this is the chief part of her.

I am beginning to think about this. Mummie has recovered. If she stays there all the winter it will be selfish on her part. Yes, selfish. . . . But Mummie will not do this, and in spite of everything, my attitude towards this selfishness is indulgent. I notice but I do not condemn it. I love her too much for that. . . . Tenderly and strongly ; a little with the love of the strong for the weak. Mummie has been suffering for a long time ; for a whole year she has been worried beyond belief. She must recover ; I say nothing : let her stay quietly there : here, too, she would not be happy.

What is nearer to me than my diary ? My Dearest ! It is a wonderful thing—my diary ! If, after all, Mummie came back, all of a sudden.

. . . .

29TH NOVEMBER. The general situation is no better than when we were in Moscow. On the contrary, the disruption has made further progress and has penetrated into the depths of the country, where there have now sprung up different governments quite hostile and alien to each other.

The foreigners are meddling in the destinies of our country. Even admitting that they are as humane and disinterested as possible, they are

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strangers for all that, and they are imposing their will upon us. Notwithstanding this, it is impossible to compare my state of mind in Moscow with *what I feel now*.

Everything then seemed to me a dark abyss ; I did not take into account my own life, placing myself, as I did, in absolute dependence on outside events. Now, my small private life is full. My own interests hide from me those of the country, and do not allow me to get a clear view of the truly awful state of affairs. . . .

Near Kieff the volunteers are fighting against the insurgents. Hundreds of people are perishing in defence of the town in which I live.

. . . .
Every day brings new torment and new atrocities. . . . And all this is so near that one can actually hear the guns firing ; but in spite of it I cannot realize that it is close to us. I cannot realize that the dreadful slaughter—war—is nearly under the walls of the city. On the contrary, all seems very far away. At school somebody was talking about the atrocities of Petliura's¹ troops ; I also spoke about them, but my heart was completely dumb ; all this is distant and strange to me. What can it mean ? That I am in the highest degree empty-headed and callous. No, that is not so. I am not the only one who feels remote from what is happening round Kieff. All these who have no relations,

¹ Famous brigand-general in the Ukraine.

no dear ones here feel as I do. And, on the contrary, those who have a *personal* tie with the events respond to them vividly, even in an exaggerated form. . . . Psychologically, this is natural and I mention it as a truth which is to be noticed in connection with myself. Am I interested in events? Do I read the papers? Not very much. I consider it my duty to read them, but I am not always able to do so, as I have but little time. My life is so full that there is no room for other interests. But here, too, it is unforgivable to go to extremes.

It is unforgivable to stand aside from such an extraordinarily important historical moment, which will perhaps mark the turning-point in the history of the world. And therefore it is every one's duty to acquaint himself at least through the papers with what is going on.

I know this, I try to carry it out, but all the same I do not always succeed. And all this because I am full of my own concerns and, as far as is possible at such times as ours, no longer depend on outside events.

After leading a life which is empty and cramped in a narrow-minded middle-class circle, yet at the same time shut in within the warm walls of a family, it is agreeable to plunge into a more sober and serious existence, to remain alone with oneself. But as time goes on this austere solitude among books and one's own thoughts, the forced silence towards others because of the absence of any

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common topic of interest, and the total lack of intercourse, become a burden and one wants to breathe a different air, and to mix with people once more. Always alone. You know it so well ; you come home, the writing-table, the books, the diary, are waiting for you ; nothing else. There is no one to talk to. Also to-day I feel this solitude. . . .

. . . We went to a *matinée* of the "Chauve Souris," a whole crowd of us. We laughed a lot, played the fool. It was pleasant and gay. And I felt a wild longing not to return home, to stay away from our dreary house, which is all too familiar to me. For the first time since Mummie's departure I had no heart for a book. . . .

And I have not got what I wanted. Yes, if Mummie were here. . . . To-day especially I want Dearest. What if suddenly she arrived !! ? No, nonsense !

I dream that we shall pass the summer somewhere at the seaside, in the south, among wonderful scenery. . . . In France. . . . A noisy little town. . . . Life in a boarding-house. . . . The public . . . a certain elegance. . . . Yes, I want all this and I should love to pass the summer thus. If things quieten down we may perhaps at least go to the Crimea.

Life, in my imagination, is something distant, which calls to me, which entices and enchants me with the manifold play of its colours. Oh to live ! To make haste and live ! . . .

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I want to celebrate my seventeenth birthday, which coincides with the end of my school years, with riotous festivities, it will be my entry into life.

I have become a dreadful lazy-bones this year, ready to throw everything aside just to sit down and read. I do not feel drawn to either lectures or friendly gatherings ; it is reaction after the intensity of my tenfold effort last summer.

Now, am I really like all the rest ? I notice that I am always conscious of everything ; it is in this, I think, that I am so unlike the others. Does this disparity also exist in one's inward world ? Yes, I should say so. Oh, how I wish some one would show me myself honestly and truthfully as I am.

It would be really interesting to hear what those with whom I am more or less intimate : Ira, Sasha, Raditch, Stolitsa, my Moscow teacher Schneider, think of me.

2ND DECEMBER. To-day my solitude has weighed on me more heavily than ever before. Oh, when *will* Dearest arrive ? At times I feel her absence so tragically. I am alone in the midst of all these people. It would be far easier if I were really alone . . . but as it is. . . .

After dinner I go to my room and by breaking off all intercourse with others, plunge myself still deeper into solitude. That is perhaps why it is so hard. Really it is just as if I were in a tomb.

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There was a moment when a lump came into my throat. Alone, always alone. I was all the time thinking about Dearest. . . .

Suppose suddenly one of these days I return from School and . . . Mummie is at home. What joy ! Really, a happier life must soon begin.

I have noticed that lately my complaints about solitude and coldness are on the increase. It is just the same as it was during the summer. As time goes on my strength forsakes me . . . but an hour passes, another one.

My depression has vanished, thank goodness, and I can work again.

5TH DECEMBER. I have read *The Death of Ivan Ilyitch*, by Tolstoy, and *The Power of Darkness*. I feel absolutely exhausted. Tolstoy is so gloomy. I can at present neither continue to read nor write. I shall try to rest, reading Nekrassov. . . . I imagine that Tolstoy must have passed through an inner struggle in these years, thought deeply. This is reflected in his writings : that is why they are so sombre. . . .

11TH DECEMBER. I have not written all this time, because I surrendered to an orgy of reading. And to-day between two books I decided that I must write. . . .

I often complain in my diary about coldness and emptiness. It must not be imagined that I feel

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this every day. No, there are days—and often—when I am absolutely calm and sometimes even more than that. But in those days I rarely take up my diary : it does not attract me. This is why this quiet and steady frame of mind is not mirrored in it.

Now I have made my explanation.

My cousin Jenia, the daughter of Father's brother, is dangerously ill : there is little hope, so the doctors say. It is an awful pity. The girl is only twenty, and has just shaken off the strict discipline of her home, was just beginning to live. . . . But what does that concern Death ? Does it choose its victims ? It is a horrible joke—Death. There is nothing more sombre, more repellent. And it is particularly grievous when it is the young who die. . . . The old people have had their time ; but these are only on the threshold of life.

Looking at it impartially, in this process of life—life and death—there is harmony : one man dies, the other is born, and thus, the life of *mankind* takes its course : so the centuries pass, one after the other. Out of the life of each of these pigmies is built up the great life of history.

12TH DECEMBER. To-day I must study myself. Analyse myself. So here it is. What is this idiotic tendency to self-analysis, to a strict knowledge of oneself ? This means in my case that I value my own personality and place it on a certain

11th—12th December, 1918

level. How many times have I said that, from a certain point of view, this is good and right ; but to-day I became displeasing to myself. I am very introspective ; at times I am too much immersed in my own personality. This, fortunately, does not interfere with my other feelings—and, in time, it may change altogether.

My "ego" occupies too great a part in my thoughts. I attach too much importance to myself and, because of this, I am sometimes incapable of entering into the feelings and emotions of other people ; they seem puny and insignificant in comparison with my own. And so to-day, during dinner, I realized this and became frightfully disgusted with myself on account of this sensation of stupid superiority.

Father was talking about the Ptaschkin family. Somehow we came closer to each other. The atmosphere became warmer. One must look more simply at people, and then your heart feels lighter. At once I experienced this sensation of ease and joy. Is it only I who am so miserable about Mummie ? Both Yura and Father feel it too. So I am not the only one who feels everything. It is useless to try and represent myself as a victim. I am like everybody else. . . .

This must not be allowed to happen again. I must remember that I must try to understand other people. And I appear to myself so pitiable, such a nonentity. . . . Perhaps I was, and perhaps I am still a stupid little girl who has

too good an opinion of herself. I felt so disgusted !

15TH DECEMBER. There is much to tell, but an unholy laziness has taken possession of me : I am quite unable to reason. Perhaps my cold is to blame. But I should like to discuss the social status of servants.

Their situation is very hard, one of the hardest, of which their personal dependence is an extremely unpleasant feature. There is much in this that should be altered. First it should not be despotism on one side and bondage on the other, but a free contract made by both, with the mutual respect for each other's rights and liberties.

People of a lower rank should be treated with still greater consideration than one's equals : the latter, without danger to their material independence, can answer back, whereas the inferiors must remain silent. This is one of the rules of my life, by which I direct myself even now.

The ideal is to live without servants and according to the teaching of Tolstoy : *but like every ideal, it is in the far distance* : for all the conditions of social structure would have to be changed before this could be undertaken without lasting injury to either side. For the moment we must strive for the nearest possible approach to this ideal, that is, try to improve the conditions of the servants, both physically and morally.

15th—20th December, 1918

When I think about their work, I feel appalled at the idea of its hardness. How many thousands of people are waiting for betterment. Isn't it the highest duty of man to help them?

I shall devote all my efforts to this. There is so much to do that it becomes a daily and necessary task.

20TH DECEMBER. I have felt seedy for several days and have lain in bed. Even before this, somehow, I did not feel myself; an unspeakable laziness, a dreadful apathy. To-day, I am quite right again. My mood is alert and strong: and how much lies in a mood.

For me, my own personality, my "ego" does not embrace the whole inward world. It does not seem to me that I am "everything."

A few days ago in the evening I was reading and the thought flashed through me: "You who are wont to analyse your emotions, who through this habit of self-examination stand out from the mass, after all you are only part of it." Thanks to my diary, and my inward knowledge of myself, it is true that I raise myself above the common herd, but in moments of entire absorption in my own personality, reading a book or writing my diary, I yet remember that I am a part of the crowd, of that crowd, which at such moments seems so far. . . . And I answer myself: "Yes I know, it is so!" This feeling came so often to me in Moscow. . . .

. . . All the same I want Mummie dreadfully. To-day, I know not for what reason, spring is in my heart. I feel so strong, so alive. I should like to write, to speak without ceasing, not about scientific matters, but simply in order to chatter, to pour out my soul. That is what I am doing.

To-day I have a book by Ebers. I read about the end of the Fourth Century A.D. in the Roman Colony of Palestine in *Homo Sum*, and a shiver ran down my back. Oh Lord ! That life, so different to ours, in quite a different setting, was once a reality ; for the people who lived there it was what ours is now to us, that is—everything.

And this is so wonderful, so inconceivably strange that one trembles, and wishes even more and more to come in contact with this life, to feel it, so that one should be able to visualize it clearly—but not in separate episodes relating to one country or another, but as a whole system and a whole picture. How marvellous and interesting is history.

And I wished, no, I already saw myself surrounded with historical manuals, piles of historical books and devouring them all,—in order to grasp that whole system. And I felt an insensate desire to plunge at once into the study of history.

Oh to devote one's time to it, what deep pleasure ! But not all one's time, part of it : apart from history there is much that is good in the world. Everything is interesting, wherever one looks. To learn, and learn, and learn.

20th December, 1918

In bed, and up to my illness, I was reading Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* and *Resurrection* ; and naturally could not ignore the feminist question which he raises in this book. I shall for the present speak about the first.

By the way, with regard to my opinions on free love, I was reading just then a book called *In the Whirlpool*, by Pisemsky, written in this spirit. There is truth in both these books, and yet the one contradicts the other. It was difficult, I searched, tormented myself, yet could not arrive at a decision. I was able to grasp the sense of the Tolstoy tragedy, but it is so great that it crushes me. I always seem to see his venerable head, with the harsh and serious glance ; the great old man oppresses me. I have begun to feel an instinctive fear of him. And to-day, during my historic mood, I said to myself frankly : " Leave it alone for a while. You are quite capable of understanding it, but he oppresses and bruises your spirit ; there is plenty of time ; take advantage for the moment of what interests you, and develop your mind : as to the rest, the time for it will come. You are not yet ripe for Tolstoy. . . ." And I was intending to read him this year. Truly one feels oneself small, small and stifled. No, the Tolstoy of these last years is not for me, and on the whole I think that he is too abstruse and that many share my feeling when they read him.

With regard to *Resurrection*, it is not so ponderous ; indeed, I learned much from it that is new and

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valuable : it has again directed my thoughts to the path which they should have taken last year : that of social reform, and therefore I am glad that I have read it. I understand the censuring of Nekhlúdob at the end, but do not think that it really touched me. No doubt, *Resurrection* is somewhat heavy. This is not so perceptible in the style, but the impression remains. And this comes as closely as possible to my impression of Tolstoy : as of a man of profound inner thought. He himself at times was weighed down by the depth and the immensity of his intellect, and it is this very consciousness which the poet could not fail to infuse in his work, if he wrote while labouring under this inward yoke.

Thank God, I have reached the social problems. When I am in this communicative mood I could write about anything to which I set my mind.

Good night ! . . . To-morrow "The Ram"¹ will return our essays.

I always get fearfully strung up over them. What will happen ? I know that if I cannot get five² I shall not feel satisfied. I am nearly sure I shall not get it. Four and a plus.

21ST DECEMBER. There is plenty of time to-day, and no special book I want to read, so I am going to write.

¹ Nickname for one of the masters.

² The highest mark.

20th—21st December, 1918

As I expected I did not get a five. Four only, and it gave me a knock. . . . However much you may try to convince yourself that you won't get five, in your heart something outside your reason says, "What if it came off after all!" I am sorry, not so much on account of the five, as because my failure seems an additional proof that I am just one of many: does it mean that my dreams, my belief in myself, in my future, are an illusion? . . . Nothing of the sort. In the first place, talent and special gifts are not at all indispensable for social work, and doing good to one's neighbours. In the second place, after all, I am one of those who write best: *who knows what may still happen?* . . . Lastly, what can you do if you have not received the sacred gift? It will hurt, of course, if you believed that you were able to write, but there is no help for that. . . .

All the same, everything is not lost: the future, the future alone can show of what I am capable. What will it say? . . .

Now enough nonsense! . . . After reading *Resurrection*, and overhearing certain conversations between the servants, the relation between the different classes has somehow come more vividly before my eyes. How much, how much there is of evil, darkness and injustice in our society.

To consecrate oneself to the service of these unfortunate creatures, and to the improvement of their hard lot; to secure co-operation of more and more people, that is the task in front of us. It is

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only thus that I represent to myself my future life, and this is what I mean to make of it.

It would be such an immense satisfaction to shed a little light into the existence of these unhappy outcasts.

It is not enough to work for a political party, to try and attain political rights : one must enter into the life of each man individually, and try to lighten his burden ; one must see *men* in them, and not simply "proletarians" ; and acquire this outlook with all possible speed. . . . As soon as Mummie returns I shall begin to work. Mummie will help with pleasure, I am sure.

I cannot organize a school of my own yet, but I could work somewhere in a crèche, "the Drop of Milk." Franya might advise me, but she is away.

With radiant confidence I think of the school-refuge for children, from which they will emerge strong in body and mind, capable of fighting their way through life. There are among them so many who are talented ; they will now be able to develop, with such strong support behind them.

It is necessary to found evening classes for the adults ; clubs for workmen ; have diversions that are healthy and easy of access ; occupation for girls ; schools in the villages ; bring enlightenment to the grey masses of the peasantry ; one should also ease the burden of prisoners and convicts. . . . These activities attract me more than political work, though the latter is indispensable.

21st December, 1918

It prepares the nation, and I wish to take my share in it. If only my strength holds out ! I want to study Law, for it seems to me that it can give the best practical preparation for this kind of life.

I do not know as yet what I shall be after finishing the University. This distant future is yet to be defined, but I am firmly determined that the foregoing will constitute the foundations of my life.

But for all this there must be a sound basis, and this is it : while realizing how unjust is the life of the rich in comparison with that of the poor, can one go on profiting by the material advantages which such a life secures for us ? That one cannot do so is clear even to a child. This is an important question and an important answer.

The one possesses everything, the other nothing : it is an injustice, and that ends it. If this is my opinion, the least I can do is to discontinue my present mode of life, and bring into it certain modifications which may benefit the people. I am not deluding myself : this is no easy resolution, it is even a hard one : a rich life holds much that is beautiful and my room is full of comfort and of artistic things. To break with all this means partly to deprive oneself in the future of much that is agreeable. I think about it and it is a painful thought : I feel what a sacrifice this implies.

This is the " sound " basis about which I spoke. It is serious, it is difficult, but I shall know how to deal with it.

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In any case I must not sacrifice my travelling after the University : it will develop me, and get me into close touch with humanity, with the different conditions of those to whose assistance I wish to come.

What do I mean really by simplifying my existence ? One can put so much beauty into the arrangement of one's house. . . . Beauty ! When so many people go hungry and ignorant ? No, even this beauty must be as simple as possible.

My mental atmosphere is infinitely varied : yesterday I lived in history, to-day I am taken up by this ; to-morrow I may soar in the kingdoms of chimera and phantasy. And yet my "ego" remains spontaneous and without pretence. What I have written to-day does not only represent a mood, but my programme for my future life : the tasks and the problems are too serious to be played with, light can be thrown in different ways on the subject, but the background remains the same and does not alter.

It seems to me that I become more sober, as time goes on : it is certainly so in comparison with the past. Are all so many-sided or am I an exception ? Perhaps I am to a certain extent.

24TH DECEMBER. The general situation is grey and desolate. It is definitely stated that the Bolsheviks will enter the town, as they have many friends among the troops of Petliura. And to

21st—24th December, 1918

think of this is enough to make one's heart contract. Our family especially can expect nothing good from them. . . . Again upheaval, persecution, flight, the total disruption of our life which was just beginning to take shape . . . just to think about these things is terrifying. Such a dreadful feeling !

Really, with them one can only see the future in a sombre light. And we have already gone through so much ! Again our life will be unbalanced for a long time. . . . Hardships. . . . We have had an object lesson that will last us a lifetime. . . . For me and all of us the Bolsheviks are synonymous with a nightmare.

. . . No news at all from Mummie. How will all this end ? What will happen ? Time goes, the New Year is just ahead. But Father will not start, he is just playing at preparations.

If at least we could correspond with her ! How bad everything is round us. When will this end ?

We are told that direct communication between Odessa and Marseilles is going to be established. What a state we have reached if this seems like heavenly manna. France ! . . . a peaceful life. The Bolsheviks, who change daily the aspect of politics—all this far away. . . . And suddenly—quiet pleasant faces, stable general conditions, the possibility of living *normally* ! . . . To live normally ! This is a distant vision, a magic dream.

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. . . When, when will it become a reality? Can it be that for us everything is over? Verily, "our sufferings will be turned into joy for those who will come after us. . . ."

A joy, that is bitter, yet full of craving, seizes me when I think of France—of our quiet life there. . . . But it is also bitter! For I am ashamed that I should think of fleeing for safety to a foreign country, while thousands remain here in torment. Even when I am there this feeling of shame will prevent me from enjoying my new-found peace to the full. But I doubt whether peace can be complete even there? Probably not. The fire that has swept across the world has not left a single spot unscathed. Yet it is better abroad, incomparably quieter than here.

But a feeling of shame caused by our flight from our country. . . . You cannot escape anywhere from *that*! To emigrate, to leave one's native land! . . . How hard!

What is coming? There seems no end to this nightmare. Many years will pass before things take a more or less normal course in Russia. But what if, meanwhile, we were really to settle abroad? It would be both good and bad. In these exceptional moments one feels that one loves one's country. . . .

When you think about Paris, about foreign parts (I am just now thinking particularly of France, and of what will happen there). I am very happy. . . . It is to France that I feel especially drawn.

24th—27th December, 1918

Reality is grey and murky. There is no gleam of light. The Bolsheviks . . . terror . . . flight—what a harsh dissonance it all is. . . .

To-day the present has made itself especially felt and probably this sensation will persist.

27TH DECEMBER. This is what happened to-day. I received a letter from Mummie. It was the answer to my separate, secret letter to Dearest.

In one of her letters from the Crimea, Mummie somehow complained of her solitude, and behind this complaint I read deep sorrow and agitation, so I wrote separately, reasoning with her, encouraging her. To-day I received an answer, though I told her that I did not want one, that my letter required none. But Mummie wrote and that is a pity. . . .

What shall I do? The letter is addressed to me and its contents are for me alone. . . . To show it to a third person is unpleasant, whoever he or she may be. This brief correspondence is only the concern of two people, Mummie's and mine.

But what ought I to say to Father? The thunder-storm was unavoidable, this I understood at once and, as always, did not wait for it, but met it half-way. I said that I had received a letter, but did not want to show it. The storm burst.

• • •
Generally speaking, I need not show my letters

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to any one, and am not at all obliged to do so. Even from my "childish" point of view, I am sufficiently reasonable to be in a position to have private affairs of my own : on the other hand, I deserve the full confidence of my parents, and my right to a *personality* must be respected by them.

And Mummie always respected it and respects it. In Saratoff I received letters addressed to "Nelly Ptashkina" ; Mummie never opened them : she did not insist on reading them and if she had asked me and I had refused, she would have been grieved, but would have understood this and not lost her temper ; each of us has in one's heart a secret recess, where nobody else is admitted. Father does not recognize my rights as an *individual*. He is my father ; perhaps for him I am still a child, but in any case he considers his full right to deal with my correspondence and my "private copy-books." I don't know whether it will be the same thing later when I am grown up. . . . If so, the struggle which is ahead will be more serious than it is to-day.

On the whole I was right, I had the *right* not to wish Father to read my letter, he had no business to demand it and to get angry. . . .

And as a sequel there are other more important questions. But taking the sum total, was I wrong and how far ?

I am very tired to-day. . . .

27th Dec., 1918—1st January, 1919

1ST JANUARY, 1919. New Year, but one does not feel a bit like it. What is New Year really? The completion of the orbit of the earth round the sun. But all the same it creates an atmosphere and I even felt this with particular insistence when I was thinking about it yesterday. To-day appeared to me like a bright radiant holiday.

Luckily for me the weather is fine: there is a blue sky, sunshine—the air has an invigorating crispness. . . . But this is only for to-day. To-morrow I shall begin again to work. I must write two essays on Christmas. It is a pity but it can't be helped.

So here, without apparent cause, I have achieved a bright, pleasant day. . . .

With regard to the unpleasantness I have mentioned before, it is all finished. As usual, after blazing up, Father quietened down, and was particularly affectionate to me. Thus I was able to regain my peace of mind: my conscience was quite clear, and everything being amicably settled I thought no more about it. Moreover, I do not want to spoil the present.

Anyone who is given to concentrated self-analysis becomes a unit to himself, and the others only appear to him as a grey uniform mass. I am very far from being an exception to this rule. Generally speaking, I am subjective, even to a repugnant degree. . . .

It is curious how the same things can be different, looking at them from a blue (poetry) or a brown

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(prose) point of view. And how everything changes, takes on a different tint. Everything—beginning with love !

For the present, I am filled with rosy hopes. Magic spring beckons, the summer with its pleasures and its lovely scenery is coming.

There is not much longer to wait, time will pass quickly now.

2ND JANUARY. The festive days continue. Delightful. Yesterday we went on the spree. I also visited Sash-Ira. At times it is restful to spend a day with them. In the evening they celebrated the New Year. It hurt me when I heard about it. I so much wanted. . . .

And all this because of my accursed shyness. I waited to see whether they would ask me to spend the night there. They did not. All the same it is better to be diffident. This bitterness also held something that was sweet, for Sasha regretted so much that I was not with them. Dear fellow ! How pleasant it is to feel that you are loved by those whom you love yourself. I am immensely grateful to him for this regret. That shows that he is fond of me. At times I would much like to know what feelings Irina has towards me. Are they anything more than mere family liking ? These questions are silly enough, but sometimes I am curious to know the answer.

Why cannot human relationship always be joyful and bright ? How easy life would become ! Just

1st-4th *January*, 1919

now, everything is so smooth and peaceful with Father. He is attentive and kind. One really feels so much happier.

Involuntarily one asks oneself: what was it that repelled me? For what reason did I not love him? And all this seems so vague. . . .

Every person, when you think of it, is like the ocean with its big and its small waves. What is greater than to study this ocean and to try and understand the laws governing its unending motion?

4TH JANUARY. The holidays pass in a somewhat desultory but pleasant manner. I read, I write essays, but they are rather empty. On the whole, though, I am quite satisfied. If Dearest came! How glad I would be. . . .

A few days ago, in my dreams, I was wafted to my "azure kingdom." This happens but rarely, though I long for it so often. So often in my dreams I want to see it and to live by the Unusual. A wondrous sea spread before me. . . . I dreamt that I held my breath, opened my eyes wide, and looked, looked, afraid to stir. . . . It was somewhere near the Southern Coast of Italy. An extraordinary expanse of water, of some bluish purple colour, streaked in places with green, and illumined by the sun. I cannot describe it now: a dream put into words is always barren. But that sight was so wonderful, that even in the morning, as I went to school thinking about it,

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my heart radiated joy. It was the picture of my promised "azure kingdom"—a miracle of beauty.

I have already written somewhere of the beauty that is attendant upon wealth and would be abolished by Socialism. To-day I have been to the cinema : the picture was presented in a marvellous setting and while admiring the sumptuous drawing-rooms and the beautiful parks, I had to think of poor tenement-houses with their pitiful miserable inmates. Can one hesitate in choosing between them ? Not a single moment. It is the same in life. . . .

A few days ago I behaved horribly, disgracefully. . . . I bought sweets for a hundred roubles ! How many children could have been fed on that money at Christmas !

I thought about this, I reproached myself and yet I went and bought them ! . . .

It is a shame ! Perhaps my guilt is lessened by confession ; however, it remains an ugly slip. Even half would have been enough. But I wanted to indulge myself so desperately, and to surrender recklessly to pleasure and to extravagance. My motto is : " Eat, drink and be merry for to-morrow we die ! " It is in this way I like to enjoy myself, without thinking. . . .

Often I am carried away by this mad impulse. If one looks at it dispassionately, how much stupidity and senselessness there is in it, but at these moments one does not count the cost, one only drifts. And

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it is gay ! I love such gaiety. And not only such gaiety, but every kind of impulse. I am impetuous. Perhaps passionate.

Now let us talk about people—about my Dearest.

Perhaps it is an impression resulting from the books I have been reading, or perhaps it is true, but I look upon myself as belonging to the new, and Mummie to the Old World.

My “New World” expresses itself in this way, that in seeking for ideals, the motive power belongs to my brain, whilst with Mummie everything comes from the heart. Dearest loves all that is beautiful and elegant : she is drawn to it, she longs for an interesting life. These are the foremost aims of the “Old World.” And, wishing for this, desiring it, she suffers passively. This does not mean that she is inactive, but Mummie cannot manifest her feelings, and suffers in the process.

We, the new, apart from this, demand intensive activity. Our spirit has a bolder flight, which often leaves the “old” conceptions far behind.

Perhaps this is only imagination, only the “right of youth,” and perhaps in analysing them I magnify their suffering.

I am in a transitory stage ; one part of me is on one side and one on the other. So it seems to me. And in this duality lies what most distinguishes me from the others.

Yes, there is much in me that belongs to the new times, to the coming generation, and at the same

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time the old has not left me : from this springs the complexity of my nature.

I do not know whether I exaggerate, but it almost seems to me that this is so. Unquestionably I possess many of the elements which go to the formation of the clear-headed modern woman.

What shape is all this going to assume ? I want to believe that the future will not disappoint me.

I have chattered enough for to-day.

8TH JANUARY. The holidays. I do not write much. That is because I read a lot : I have three books : one on geography, one on history and one on "nothing in particular"—*Corinne* by Mme. de Stael, and I spend whole days reading.

. . . In history I am reading the *Historical Letters* by Lavrov. I read them with great pleasure : all that the author says is so comprehensible to me. I agree silently with him, with his thoughts concerning the injustice of social laws, the structure of the State. One recognizes with pleasure one's own thoughts in the brave and free words of the writer. And Lavrov's book has achieved something else.

It is not without premeditation that I have refrained for so long from mentioning the question of "free love," I was afraid to do so after Tolstoy, after the *Kreutzer Sonata* : Lavrov has instilled new confidence into me. I have acquired from him several valuable words about love, about sexual attraction.

4th-9th January, 1919

And now I can again write and believe. I am afraid that I have not the courage to say that Tolstoy is wrong. But his beliefs are not made for the new, energetic and active life of the spirit. . . . But, perhaps, the whole of life is a lie, and truth only resides in the words of the great old man. It is because of these doubts that I should not have read the *Kreutzer Sonata*. It would have been better to go on believing.

. . . What if Dearest came? No, this cannot be, and knowing this, I give myself up all the same to dreams. Why should one not dream? In one's dreams it is so lovely and bright. . . .

9TH JANUARY. Is not all life that is built up at the bidding of reason a sham? And Tolstoy's teaching the only truth? I do not dare to affirm that I know him, but still I do, if only by his *Kreutzer Sonata*. The ideals of Tolstoy are higher and sterner than ours; they are more sublime. And to hold them one must be great, as Tolstoy is great. For me they are too immense. They crush me by their majesty. I cannot raise myself to them. Perhaps I am unable to agree with this writer, but I cannot help feeling their terrifying power.

No, at the moment, at least, they are not for me. One must meditate about them deeply, try to interpret them, and it would be strange indeed if they came within my scope.

Only later, having passed through life, can one

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penetrate their inner meaning, but for us there is too much sternness and abstraction in them.

No, we can only live our own life ; the daring, the new one, based on reason. And we can only look up with veneration from below to the peaks of unattainable ideals, and respect them, as one respects religious enthusiasm and ardent faith. We do not understand, but are afraid to condemn them. They are not for us, we are not for them, but life must be built up. Built up according to that powerful voice which resounds within us.

Is sexual attraction natural, or must it be suppressed ? A most interesting question for study.

. . . What is physical attraction ? I know that the majority, if not all, will say : " It is natural." Tolstoy will remain alone in his opinion. But for me this is no proof that he is wrong.

I see life without sexual love. I do not know whether this can be, but I should incline to think that it is possible. It is simpler and more comprehensible ; however, not knowing where truth is, I dare not affirm this, but want to think that it *is* the truth.

The feeling exists. And at present it expresses itself in uncouth and misshapen forms. New ones must take their place. That is what I think.

Love is a feeling, and like every feeling it cannot be made quite subservient to the mind. It has its rights, which people refuse to admit. One speaks of eternal love, love burdened with chains. Probably eternal love exists, yet it is possible that

9th January, 1919

this is not the case. It may be a passing thing, yet passionate and sincere. . . .

Why will not people reckon with evidence? Love must be given the chance to develop freely, only according to feeling, without coercion. History has done much in this direction. From a soulless, compulsory institution, marriage has become something like a voluntary alliance. But the freedom of love stopped half way. Marriage is contracted by consent, but obstacles are set to love.

Divorce is a formality and re-marriage is limited to a certain number of times.

I believe that, except in this guise, love is persecuted by almighty public opinion. People want to create laws made from dead words and rules, to cage free feelings. . . .

We have a maid living with us. For many years she has had a "*liaison*" with a decent employee. They live in perfect happiness and love, which is the chief thing. And this love which we know is free, only depending on their will, is more touching than the love of married people. They love each other, and, nevertheless, they have been neither to Church nor to the Registry Office. They are happy. This is how I look at it.

But while writing, a new question rises before me. What is it that we condemn in marriage? Not the love of a third person, but the lie that envelops this love. This lie can also occur in free love.

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What is there to prevent our Fenya from deceiving her Paul ?

All the same, the possibility of this lie occurring in the freer and more cultured forms of love becomes less, as the fact of parting with the former love is made simpler.

It is easier for a woman to say "I do not love you," than to set in motion the complicated procedure of divorce, which may not come off, as happened with R. and her husband.

Therefore, in cohabitation, love that is sincere can unfold just as well as in marriage ; and when love is absent, the complications of parting from the man one has ceased to love are simplified as much as possible.

In principle I am against marriage, regarding it only as an entanglement for love, which I consider a free feeling, independent of man.

But in denying this institution which is hallowed by custom and tradition, one meets with many new developments. In our times much has been done to simplify marriage, civil marriage being its most perfect form. It is even possible to reconcile oneself to the latter. To be precise, what is the difference between the total absence of marriage and its civil form ?

The change of the surname, the change of certain judicial rights. The full absence of the marriage ceremony is only a further step in this direction. Civil marriage is only the legal consecration of a definite contract between two people.

9th—11th January, 1919

Well what of it? Such a "free union" has no influence on the fate of children. They are brought up as they would have been otherwise.

Now, if one of the parents changes and changes more than once? In that case the children can remain with the one who has stayed with them, or they can be brought up under a given control. They will not grow up more immoral or more stupid because of that, and only their feeling of freedom will find an untrammelled development.

It seems to me that this is so. I would not like to go astray. And if my belief remains later on the same as it is at present, I shall live up to it without hesitation.

Civil marriage seems to me more or less acceptable. About the children I am still going to think.

11TH JANUARY. No burning questions occupy my mind, and I am beginning to wonder whether I have really become so narrow? What can you expect from my present normal and monotonous existence . . . and yet—no, I am still the same and shall always remain true to myself.

I have been thinking about marriage.

In reality, what is marriage? Only a formality. For sincere people, pure love can exist also without it: for evil-minded ones it does not exist in marriage either.

How do I imagine that civil marriage takes place?

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Two people love each other. They go and sign a register. This is all. But there is even no need to register. If they wish, they continue to live apart ; if not—they live together.

What tightens their bonds, the ceremony or their feelings ? No ; really marriage is a prejudice, a tradition.

Yet how much beauty there is in love ! It is wonderful. I read by chance a letter from Sasha to Grannie about Irina at the time of their betrothal. And with what emotion and tenderness I read of the feelings which agitated him. Unhappy and poor is the man who has not experienced love. . . . How sweet love must be !

Cheerfulness has returned to me. And not at all because of my thoughts about love. No.

I was looking through my diary. Really it is most diverting. What a pity that my other copy-books have remained in Moscow. They will get lost. A pity ! They would have been a pleasant reminder of life in Saratoff, that is of my childhood. I am very different now from what I was then. Thank Heaven that I grow and do not remain stationary. . . .

. . . I return to marriage. It strives to suppress immorality, that is, sensuous, animal love, but does not succeed. Without marriage there will be more sincerity of feeling. A couple has ceased to love—has parted ; each of them has made a new life with some one else. There is no immorality in this. But there is in the “ sale ”

11th-14th January, 1919

of love, in its prostitution. With the suppression of marriage love will not become purer on the whole. But neither will it become more sullied. Consequently there is no regression ; in the sense of progress there is the sincerity of feeling. I can hear them objecting : " Then they will change their lovers every day." No, sincere love will remain sincere. . . . There is only a minor point left—the surname. As a matter of fact I believe the whole of civil marriage just consists in that change of name. Even to me it seems strange that " husband and wife " will be known by different names. But is not this merely a question of habit ? The difference of names cannot alter the matter intrinsically. . . .

Many think that I am all " learning and books." How little they know me ! It is a dreadful error : that is only a small part of me. It is true that I spend whole days in reading. This is good, for there is nothing else worth while : people don't exist. . . . And suddenly. . . . Mummie ?

14TH JANUARY. I did not write, did not read. Went to Nina, having thought it over carefully beforehand. Spent the evening most pleasantly, stayed overnight, in the morning went out with Irina and Nina shopping for the New Year. In the evening went to Sash-Ira to see in the New Year.

Strangers were there. We kept in the back-ground, but it was most diverting to watch.

. . . I have sat down to my diary, about which

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I had been thinking since the visitors went yesterday. I wanted to chat about Sasha's guests ; in general to talk about the thoughts they had aroused in me.

I used to "feel" the New Year, in times long past, when I longed to make a festivity of it. Yesterday I did not feel it ; I even thought of going to my room at eleven o'clock to work and to begin again my "hermit's" existence. I deliberated about it for a long time. Then I decided to remain, mapped out a programme for the whole day, beginning with all of us going for a walk together. In this way I turned it into a holiday. My heart quickened with pleasure. New Year meant nothing, the holiday was the chief thing. But it is because I rarely make one for myself that it has such a charm for me. This will not happen again until my studies begin. To-day is my last day of freedom.

I should like to put down something else. Perhaps I make too much of trifles, trying before I decide to think out the consequences clearly, and then only to act. But if I think a great deal "before" and "after" I do not change my mind, at least I try not to. . . . The chief thing : I do my best never to regret what is done, and I am able to say with satisfaction, that having previously made up my mind to that effect, I nearly always succeed.

When you observe people whom you have not met before, how exceedingly interesting you find

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them. Of course, when they are all strangers, and you are able to watch them from afar, as I did at Sasha's, every one stands out on the strength of his own personality. An entirely new world opens up before us. Regardless of whom they are? Nearly. Because, however insignificant a person may be, he has his own individuality.

At Sasha's I saw many interesting and charming people. The reason I watched them with such pleasure was that the atmosphere was slightly Bohemian, full of fun, laughter and enjoyment, and had none of the formality of "high-life." Of course, we drank and flirted a little.

I went away and could not go to sleep for a long time, thinking : about what ? About that general impression of something new and heterogeneous which these people left behind them. And how wonderful was this wealth of new impressions. That is why I am always so pleased to meet fresh people.

. . . During the party, I held aloof, even too much so, but it could not have been otherwise : there were strangers, grown-ups. Another more "advanced" girl would have had a far freer manner.

. . . True, I am inclined to be terribly bashful, but I console myself with the thought that in my own circle I should have been, and shall be, less timid. But my "ego" is comparatively so unimportant that it seems hardly worth while to worry about it and to reproach myself for this timidity, which really is of no consequence. . . .

. . . Several of us girls, in my class, have decided to write a novel—well? This has proved much more difficult than we imagined. Formerly, when we had no idea of what a novel is composed, it was easy; but now, when we know that a novel embraces life, which must be observed and thought out, the question becomes more complicated. Especially for myself! I am unable to survey the whole setting of a plot with the practised glance of the writer. I know too little about it.

I can make separate observations of people, scenes; but no more. I do not know life, and am unable to invent it. Also, it seems strange to me to pick out a definite person, and begin to follow her in imagination through the different phases of her existence.

Apart from this, there are technical difficulties: I cannot decide upon the background, the actions and the sphere of my heroes.

On the one hand, this is of course unpleasant, but on the other I am glad that I am capable of understanding that is necessary to a novel, and that I realize that I am not sufficiently prepared for it.

Though I know that it is wrong and conceited, I confess to a dreadful curiosity with regard to the opinion of other people about myself. It is especially pleasant when the latter confirms that which one is wishing and hoping to hear.

Only to-day—and this is what led to these thoughts, I heard Marussya (our maid) speaking

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about me. She said : " She is good " ; and Raya said : " Clever, but rather disagreeable in a way. . . . " Marussy's opinion is most pleasing and valuable to me. I am so glad that in my behaviour I live up to my convictions. And who is there who does not love to be called clever ? I know perfectly well why Raya said I was " disagreeable " : at times I am very sharp with her.

23RD JANUARY. Mummie has arrived. Quite unexpectedly. I am mad with joy. A pity that she and Father missed each other. I shall write no more to-day.

26TH JANUARY. Only three days have passed, and how many changes. Life has altered completely. Again the ponderous march of history tramples our puny lives underfoot, smashing them, altering their course ruthlessly. At moments I am caught by the same sensation as in Moscow, of being in the grip of some fearful force which I am able to touch. The Bolsheviks are closing in upon the town. The bourgeois " intelligentsia " is fleeing panic-stricken. All are rushing to Odessa, to the Crimea. . . . For the time being it is impossible to go abroad. . . . Yesterday Father arrived. Neither he nor Mother know exactly what to do : we belong to Kieff, but should we stay here ? Try to resist these troublous moments by remaining on the spot ? In a word, not to budge, just as the great mass of residents is doing.

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On the other hand, how long is this going to last? This reign of the Soviets, this isolation? And how well we know what horrors they bring with them. So time passes in the midst of this indecision. In the end, one hopes that there will be room in the trains and that we shall be able to go away;—but, if not? . . . In that case, Providence clearly intends us to stay.

Since Mummie's return my life has been more normal. But these three days have passed in ceaseless changes and in the uncertainty which continues up to this moment. We are expecting Father every minute, and he will decide whether it is to be "yes" or "no." Anything is better than this torturing uncertainty.

Just now, when we are entangled in this mesh of outside events, one feels what terrible times we are passing through. Perhaps, even, one feels them too vividly, and they become tinged with a purely personal emotion. . . .

One sees opaque darkness from which there is no escape.

Supposing we go to the Crimea? The summer too will pass and we shall again be obliged to decide on something else. But what? Everywhere there is disorder and anarchy. One must reconcile oneself to it, one must live under those conditions. Time flies. The years go by. What is ahead?

Blood flows and people go on perishing. . . . Is it possible that a time will come when all this will be a thing of the past? When life will be normal

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again ? And can it be that in those other countries—France, England—it runs smoothly, and that people are not living on a volcano ? When one thinks of this, they appear like the promised paradise, and one longs to reach them.

Well, what of it ? We can go at once to Odessa, and if the communications are re-opened and there is the slightest possibility of moving,—go abroad.

I clearly represent to myself the Russian coast receding little by little, and with it all our present life. . . . Something new begins. . . . Quite new. This is—another life. Life for many years in different surroundings. Yes, that would be something quite new.

And just because this would mean a complete severance from our old life, deep down in my heart there is bitterness and pain.

But I know nothing. Perhaps we shall go. Anyway, it is a good thing that we shall know something by the evening. What will happen ? What ?

CHAPTER 3

Kieff — Paris : February, 1919 — February, 1920

24TH FEBRUARY, KIEFF. What a long time since I last wrote. How much water has passed under the bridge. I do not know whether I shall be able to put down everything to-day—I do not think so. Really, I do not even know where to begin.

All this time we have suffered so much from the Bolsheviks that we have but one thought, one dream : to go, to get away from them. This is the nearest and the most pressing problem, and about which I most want to speak.

It seems as if there were only one possibility of escape : to go by some international Red Cross train to Odessa with a guarantee, and, if it is possible to come to an agreement with the French authorities there, to proceed to Constantinople.

And from Constantinople the road is open. What happiness, what magic dream : to go to France, to live quietly and happily. To begin a new life. . . . This is happiness indeed !

Something uplifts me when I think that this is no dream, no idle fancy, but a future that can be translated into reality : the day after to-morrow we shall have a definite answer, and to judge by what we heard to-day I think it will be satisfactory.

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Until Wednesday life is suspended. I try to kill time somehow. I seem to feel that it will be "yes." . . .

A distant magic world. . . . How far it seems from us, who live here, and how beautiful it appears. I imagine life in Paris, in France, as something new and wonderful. And is it not so? We are so tired of the never-ending turmoil and anxiety, that the mere idea of peace draws us like a magnet. And suddenly all these words will become reality.

The years will pass. . . . I shall be a young lady and have finished my education. In Russia things will have settled down a little, perhaps entirely. . . . I return. . . . How dear everything will seem to me. How different will be my future if our flitting takes place. I dream about it as of happiness. And suddenly . . . I do not dare to contemplate a "no."

Thus I dream and hope. And while we shall live happily and without care in France, the history of Russia will run its course. People will go on suffering and dying : the life of the nation will be, as before, subject to volcanic changes, and we run away from it in such a cowardly fashion ! But it is the natural impulse of man : charity begins at home. But what if the whole world were suddenly set alight and there should be nowhere to go ? Then one would have to go on living in fear and trembling as we are now, without getting anything out of life. But I cannot imagine this. For the

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moment all is quiet there, and it is possible to find a refuge. Oh if only . . .

Poor, poor Russia, what is going to happen? Something new is in the making, but when it will crystallize is a question that only the distant future can answer. The fire will burn and ravage for a long time still. . . .

And living far away, in calm surroundings, after having closely experienced all this, one sees more clearly still the perspective of history.

All the same, no! I want to take a part in the political life of Russia, and shall do so. There is scope for boundless effort on behalf of our people, and I shall bring my offering to it. I want to devote my strength to the work of national education if only I find it in myself. . . .

3RD MARCH. Again I have not written for a long time, but now this is over. Enough! From to-day I have begun to lead a rational life. Working, reading, writing in my diary, "and so on and so forth," as my friend Lelia R. says.

But until to-day I have been lounging about, wasting my time, in an incredibly inane manner. . . .

Our departure is still in the air: I believe that it will be arranged in a week or two. I am afraid to think about it. It is unthinkable that such a life will drag on for long. Months, years. . . . Some of my relations have left. All the week preceding their departure it was rumoured that

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the Bolsheviks would enter the town, if not to-day, to-morrow : the atmosphere was full of tension and nervousness. . . .

As a result of endless conversations with Mummie, Father expressed the desire that we should follow them at once, but Mummie's indecision and vacillations continue. She did not want to leave hurriedly, and to deprive herself once more of family life, to which she had just returned. In the depth of her soul Mummie wanted much more to stay, she could not visualize clearly enough the terror of life under the Bolsheviks.

It was, I must admit, my intense desire to go away, in spite of objections which cold reason placed before my mind.

In the first days following the departure of part of our family, it was definitely stated that the Bolsheviks would not come. We congratulated ourselves on their wise decision. But our peace of mind was not for long : terror and panic ran riot before the approaching conquerors. This time we also felt it, but it was too late ! The trains stopped running. We remained behind . . . and Mummie was overwhelmed with remorse. At moments in my heart I secretly blamed her.

The requisitions, the domiciliary visits, the robberies began under the flag of Bolshevism.

In our huge house, number five on the noisy Krestchatik,¹ there reigned nervousness and excitement.

¹ Chief thoroughfare of Kieff.

3rd March, 1919

We were alone in the large apartment. . . . Mummie kept worrying and did not sleep. . . .

All that time Sash-Ira's flat stood empty and could at any moment be commandeered for billeting, and it seemed a pity that their young nest, which had just been furnished, should be destroyed. It is so quiet and homely, not to be compared with the dismal rooms of Grandfather's house. The question of our moving there was raised. I tried my hardest to persuade Mummie as she, too, was tired of life on the Krestchatik.

One evening we sat together for a long while, while with all the power of my eloquence—if one may call it so—I pointed out to her the advantages of our removal. The next morning it was decided to begin to pack our most necessary belongings, a process which is ever hateful to me. . . . And in the morning we were lying in bed still half asleep when suddenly the bell rang. It was about eight. Loud voices were heard from the hall, we jumped out as if shot. Mummie began hurriedly to pull out the hidden money while we slipped into our clothes. Fenja came in and explained that some soldiers had asked to be admitted in their capacity as Bolsheviks into Grandfather's apartment, where they wanted to breakfast. She answered them quietly that there was nobody at home, that her husband had gone to fetch bread, and would let them in when he came back. The unbidden guests appeared satisfied with this answer and replied that they would wait. . . .

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But this was enough. We were dressing hastily. Mummie was giving free rein to her nerves, and perhaps imagined more than there was reason for. . . . No wonder, for the inhabitants were too scared already by Bolsheviks, bandits, etc. . . . They were horrible moments in which we were preparing to escape by the back door into the other flat.

All I had heard about aggressions came into my mind, for only a short time before, in our own house, tenants had been robbed, having previously been bound with ropes.

In five minutes, in ten at the most, we were in an employee's flat in the courtyard.

Mummie could hardly breathe from palpitations and excitement. She was over-agitated and worked herself up into a panic. . . . Perhaps it was even hysterical. I do not like this trait, which also belongs to the "old" world, the world of sentimentality and sham sensibility. Soberness, coolness, strength of will and the power to control oneself are the qualities I admire most. I try to educate myself in them. And with satisfaction, I note in every practical instance, and also in this case, that they manifest themselves. . . . I am unable to refrain from boasting that I had sufficient presence of mind to send to the House Committee.

Lately, that is since Mummie's return, I have begun to notice in my Dearest little things which annoy me. These are of course, trifles; they cannot

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influence my love for her, but I condemn them a little in my heart. These vacillations enter into this category and they have unfortunately been transmitted to me, but I shall try to cure myself of them as I do of other things. In such occurrences I have somehow begun to take Father's side and to look a little condescendingly on Mummie. I hasten to add that on the whole there is much solicitude in my attitude towards Dearest ; this, of course, is as it should be when one's child is a child no longer, and is conscious of it.

7TH MARCH. I have not written these days, but it is not on account of having lost the habit of writing ; I have been reading. I finished the *Villa on the Rhine* and *On the Nieman*. A great many books have been accumulating for me to read. . . . I must finish Orcheshko ; the novel by M. Nordau, *The Disease of the Century*, is not yet begun, and there is also *The Trilogy*, by Garin, which I have wanted to read for a long time. Apart from this, by spring, summer, I must finish Tchekhov and get through several books on special subjects. So that there is much work in front of me. It is lucky that I have more time : I have no English lessons and no music.

During the day I felt in a writing mood. Images and dreams rose before me, but they dissolved in the prose of every day. I shall therefore continue my narrative. . . . Nothing more has been heard of our departure.

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. . . Ultimately, the affair with the pillagers found a peaceful solution : they went, but how much excitement they had caused. Fear magnifies everything. We imagined that every unknown visitor who came to see us on that day must be a robber.

This adventure decided the matter and we transferred ourselves and our belongings to Sasha's. The first evening we felt some embarrassment with respect to the servants, but soon all "fell into line" and we settled down admirably in the cosy flat. But this peace was not for long.

Under us there was an empty flat, and "they" requisitioned it for a hospital. In a trice soldiers took possession of the kitchen. But it would have been all right if that had been all that happened. We were sitting down to dinner. One of them, young, impudent, with a cigarette in his mouth and a cap on his head, came into the dining-room. "Allow me to admire your house. Y-yes, nice rooms . . ." and marched out. In the evening, two drunken Red Guards demanded to see the apartment. Iliouscha showed them everything courteously and quietly. They were on the point of departing, when an argument broke out between them and the servants. Drunk, their right hands hidden in their pockets, goodness knows what would have happened. Somebody sent to the hospital to fetch the commander, and after long confabulations—and rather loud ones—they were apparently led away.

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We were beginning to recover from the fright, when suddenly the figure of one of them shoots up before us like an apparition. We were petrified. "How can I get to the Political Commissary?" the terrible "tovarishtch" (comrade) demanded coolly. We submissively showed him the way. But the commissary never set eyes on him: he simply wanted to get away from his comrades, in order to escape punishment: he succeeded in hiding and when everything became quiet he went home in the coolest manner imaginable.

But our "saviours" were equally delightful! One of them on the next day got as drunk as a lord, and kicked up an unholy row in the kitchen, where he smashed the crockery and swore at the cook: true, in the evening he excused himself profusely, as he was threatened with severe punishment if the cook should prove obdurate and unwilling to pardon him.

Another incident that occurred with one of the "commanders" left a deep impression on my mind, especially as it took place soon after I had read *Sachaline*. He was dressed in a different way from the others and his costume became the subject of our talk: flaming red shirt, black trousers and a military cloak (Ukrainian). In conversing with me this "comrade" went to great pains to choose *clever* words, and in general was trying to show off in all his glory: "We too, so to speak, are educated." Oh, this "comrade" was convinced that he was irresistible! Having driven out the

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drunken visitors, he established himself in the dining-room, in the full consciousness of his rights, and began a conversation, carelessly spilling the ashes of his cigarette all over the carpet.

"Those are not real Bolshevists, who profit by the moment". . . . The word "moment" pleased him very much and he used it frequently. "Will you come and have tea?" a soldier asked him in passing. "No, I do not desire it," he answered negligently. No wonder! He liked the beautiful dining-room, the talk with the masters of the house. . . . It was only a short while since such things had become accessible to him. "From where did you get this beautiful uniform, comrade?" He began to laugh. "This is . . . what d'you call him?" he turned round to a friend, having evidently forgotten the word. . . . "Gaidamak" was the answer. "That's it. . . . I killed a Gaidamak and pulled off his uniform," he concluded, laughing gently, even with a touch of bravado. He has killed a man and has dragged his uniform off him, what can be more simple and more natural? But we were unable to reach such a mentality; our blood ran cold.

To kill a man—I cannot imagine how one can do this, but on top of that, to rob him. . . . And he laughed! And this was one of the best, who had saved us from the drunken plunderers.

Something more. Mummie was relating to the assistant surgeon that they were keeping their hands in their pockets where they probably had

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their revolver. "Like this?" he asked, smiling benignly and dragging out of his pocket a huge revolver.

In the end, everything gradually settled down, and only the remembrance would have remained, if . . . if. . . . A "red" nurse came on the scene and asked to be allowed to stay overnight. Thinking it would be for the best, we let her in, that is, Mummie let her in, while I was indignant with her—braggart!—for being so obliging: the "sister" had constant visitors, who even spent the night with her: on the following day they requisitioned the cook, who had prepared their dinner; filled the whole apartment with stink, darted about everywhere, giving us no peace, etc.

. . . The situation became so impossible that we had again to return to the Krestchatik, where it was quiet for the time being.

8TH MARCH. But it is here that the worst happened! Once towards evening I was washing my hair, the others were sitting in the dining-room. Suddenly a shrill peal, I hear from the bathroom rough masculine voices, the scrunching of boots, but decide not to come out. After a few minutes, I hear myself being called. Dressing hastily, with my head still wrapped in a towel, I come into the bedroom and see. . . . Several men in uniform are bustling about, plunging into cupboards, picking out keys. . . .

"Will you allow me, I will show you myself,"

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Mummie says in a voice that is vibrating with excitement. "If you please, if you please, Madame, only don't get excited," politely, even gallantly, says one of "them."

I named him the "Gallant one," but later on I heard that his surname was Sch-ro.

The Bolsheviks had come with an order for Grandfather's arrest.

"He is dead," they were told.

"You are the daughter?"

"Yes," answered Mummie, though one of the most solid arguments in favour of our security in Moscow was that Mummie was able to conceal her connection with the M-mk.

"Your brothers?"

"They have left."

"One of them must be in Kieff; where is he?"

"I do not know."

"Tell us, it will be better."

"I give you my word that I do not know," Mummie asserted with a perfectly clear conscience.

"In this case we are obliged to make a search and to arrest you. . . ."

"As you please."

They began to search the apartment carefully. Sch-ro looked through everything, behaving very attentively and correctly. All the time he persuaded Mummie not to get excited and to remain perfectly calm. But for the fact that Mummie was a little strung up, she behaved wonderfully

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and seemed to produce a favourable impression on Sch-ro.

The examining magistrate, "comrade Fregel" as he was called, was colder and more reserved, but at the same time supremely correct. At the beginning he was endeavouring to show himself as an idealistic democrat on principle. At the end—he softened.

Clean-shaven, with a stern glance, he really made the impression of a man of ideas, energy and strength : let me keep this image engraved on my memory, as that of the spiritual leader of a national movement.

The third, a Lett, was a boy not older than twenty-three or twenty-four at the most, abrupt, probably even cynical at times. . . . He walked about all the time with a revolver ; and did nothing but pass nasty remarks and sneer.

Sch-ro was helped in his labours by a short, unpleasant little Jew, with a marked accent, evidently a spiteful individual.

Upon finding a certain paper, he gloated.

"This is an interesting little thing, comrade Fregel," he smiled malignantly.

"The situation is serious . . . the government," he began humming under his breath. . . .

"Nothing interesting," coldly interrupted the examining magistrate : "it is the copy of the first Order of Rodsianko."

I was pleased.

This same "assistant," being left alone in a room,

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stole some money, about a thousand roubles, or even more.

They found wine. "Not a single bottle is to disappear," they severely instructed a soldier, a gay youngster, who remarked softly: "This is my gun, but there are no cartridges," gazing sadly at his empty glass.

"I propose to examine all the books," the Lett announced when they passed into the study.

"I consider this absolutely unnecessary," replied Fregel, "just look at a few."

They settled their difference on these lines.

"Who is that?" sternly questioned the same Lett, pointing to the portrait of my Great-Grandfather.

"My grandfather," answered Mummie.

"The Father of old M-k," he continued his inquisition in the same tone.

"The Father of old M-k," confirmed Mummie, smilingly.

At last the search was concluded. "We shall be obliged to take you with us, unless the House Committee is ready to vouch for you with their heads," they announced.

The representatives of the House Committee remained silent.

"Will you allow me to vouch for myself?" Mummie asked; and herewith was permitted to sign a document that she would not leave Kieff.

After that, for some reason or other, they went once more into the bedroom.

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The curt tone of the beginning was forgotten, we were pleased with each other, conversing with an excess of amiability, considering that we were "bourgeois" subjected to a search and they—Bolshevists of the Tche-Ka.¹

"Let us talk like private people," Mummie suggested; "will you explain to me why you make searches, and arrest even before the contributions?"

"Madame, believe me, we should be pleased to wait, but there is no time. . . ."

"No time . . ." echoed in one voice Fregel and the little Jew.

"Never mind, never mind," placated the gallant Sch-ro, who seemed to enjoy the conversation.

"Like hostages, Madame," he explained, "after payment you will be released."

"Or not," the judge interjected.

"So that we shall have to pay the double contribution: one for the house, and one for the business?"

"Yes, but financially you were profiting by a double income," he replied with suave irony.

What answer is there to this? On the whole I liked Fregel very much, although later, alas, he proved no better than the others: as accessible to bribery as any of them, yet this was to prove our salvation.

"Comrade Fregel" was four times in banish-

¹ Extraordinary Committee to combat counter revolutionaries.

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ment, and has suffered for his ideals : does this not somehow speak in his favour ? He seemed to me intelligent, interesting in personal intercourse and efficient in his work. I was vexed that he and Sch-ro should be my enemies, that we had to be adversaries. With what pleasure I would have questioned them, listened to their accounts of this life that was unknown to me !

(Two or three weeks later Fregel was caught in some affair and arrested. 22.3.19.) (In Nelly's handwriting).

Our leave-taking was quite friendly, they apologized at length : the one kept repeating "Madame" and the other chimed in with him.

"Farewell, citizens," was Sch-ro's last word.

I did not dare answer "farewell, citizen," for that would have sounded ludicrous from the oppressed bourgeois to the inquisitorial Bolshevist.

After their departure, I began to whirl happily through the drawing-room and singing "The devil is not so black as he is painted." Ough ! I am tired, I must rest for a while.

10TH MARCH. What a wonderfully deep satisfaction one experiences from concentrated mental effort : and reading a book on historical philosophy for my dissertation, it is so pleasant to feel that I understand everything thoroughly and as it should be understood.

All these days I shall be busy preparing for it and do not know whether I shall be able to write

8th-19th March, 1919

19TH MARCH. From the fact that I write so seldom I gather that my life is becoming more cramped. I hardly dare say so, but I really do think that it is going to run normally now. This is the first day that I have spent in a sensible and profitable fashion.

I read my historical dissertation : I polished it off in one day. In principle I have solved the question correctly and well, but have not brought in sufficient historical precedents.

But I am pleased with the result : I have worked out the problem satisfactorily.

Oh you stupid little girl ! You have forgotten to mention your thesis : "The rôle of personality in history."

One thing troubles me : taken in a narrow sense, there is very little actual work ; the Gymnasium provides for us quite inadequate occupation. When I compare my present studies with those of the summer, I am unable to look at the Gymnasium with anything but contempt. . . .

Oh what an enormous amount there remains to be done. And I have not the pluck to work at home, independently *en plus*.

I shall take up languages and add German to English.

As I have so much free time on my hands, I must occupy myself with something apart from light literature. But I want to rest first, as I read a great deal in order to prepare my dissertation. I shall take a few books for Mummie from the

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library and then shall turn to something more serious.

I have begun to read systematically in French : I want to do this year Hugo (*Les Misérables*) and the *History of the French Revolution*, by Thiers.

Lately, after a long interval, the idea of literary creation has come to me more and more often. It is still in its infancy but it is one for which my strength will be sufficient.

How desperately I should like to learn whether there is in me "the kindled spark of the divine fire" ! Perhaps it is this unconscious striving for creative power ? I do not know, I do not know anything. . . .

In any case, I want to try.

Now I have grown up, and no longer think that it is as easy to compose stories as I thought before : merely to sit down and write them.

Even in the smallest of them I see an enormous, complicated amount of labour : for life must be mirrored in each story.

But, in return for this, what deep satisfaction it must be for the creator, the real creator, who is capable of calling up living pictures out of dead words. . . . It seems to me that I experience this feeling, and share in it. . . .

Creative power exercises a tremendous attraction for me, and at the same time I am compelled to pause in admiration before the magnitude of this work. One must think profoundly before putting one's hand to it. . . .

19th March, 1919

. . . Yesterday, somehow the remembrance of that distant life in Saratoff was calling to me, though there remains nothing in common between it and myself.

I imagine—and this is so—that childhood and adolescence are encompassed by it ; and that now they are succeeded by an entirely different period : Youth ? That both these sections of my life are strictly partitioned off from each other, as it happens in books. Later on, the recollections of my life may serve as a memorial of our stormy epoch.

Perhaps, I myself. . . . But at the present moment I would never undertake such a huge effort : I do not feel that I am ripe for it.

. . . I also remember Kislovodsk.¹ . . . the beauty of its environments stands unique in my recollections, though to whatever clime Nature may turn her attention she endows it with distinctive beauty and ever new delight.

I am in the "Temple of the Air," and have remained alone seated on the stone ledge. Below in the transparent clouds of mist, the town spreads out before me. The green of the parks lies there like a dark pool, and high up in the sky the blue outline of the mountains rises steeply. The road winds in and out, a narrow ribbon. The blue mountains disappear somewhere on the horizon. . . .

On the other side, in a sharper gradient, ascend the crests of the real Caucasus : above us, the dazzling white peak of the ancient Elborouss.

¹ Watering-place in the Caucasus.

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A fresh mountain breeze carries to us the breath of the mountains, the babble of brooks and the rustling of trees. The wind enters our very soul, cleansing it from all the petty thoughts.

Listen ! Straining to a single purpose all the fibres of your being, listen to the breathing of the universe, of the *whole world* which is brought by the friendly breeze, wafted to us across the mysteriously still giants of the mountains.

How wonderful it is to listen to the breathing of Nature ! Softly, or it will not be heard. . . . Listen to the silence . . . quiet . . . so quiet.

The little human creature, a bundle of nerves, all strained attention, sits on a mound of stones, surrounded by eternity. But the infinite does not oppress him ; he understands it, his soul has penetrated nature. Oh, it is not to every one that she reveals her murmur : one must love and understand her deeply. . . . Quietly . . . more quietly. . . .

How can Nature oppress ? It is only to small and soulless people that she seems confusing ; the souls of her elect expand ; they feel their connection with the world, they merge themselves into the world, and the world incarnates itself in them. . . .

There, on the high mountains, or on the shore of the boundless sea, where there is space, Nature breathes. But not there alone. . . . It breathes wherever the noise of humanity does not drown its quiet but mighty breathing. One must only know how to listen.

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Around me there is the green forest. Mostly pines and firs. The slender pines, swaying rhythmically, rocked by the winds, incline their dark green tops to each other in salutation.

Looking upward at their rustling crowns one forgets the earth. . . . It is the noise of the sea. It is the eternal whispering of Nature. . . . The pines sway rhythmically, rhythmically, with gentle swishing noises. What is it that sounds through their murmur ?

I am not capable of transporting nature into images : I only feel everywhere a deep peace that is eternal, and an all-pervading tranquillity such as people have never known.

And below, spreads the green carpet of the trees, and the trees limit the horizon. But, limiting it, they open up the inner world of the forest, and the breathing of the world is heard again.

Tired of my books, I lie on the grass and listen. I do not think, but my being is full of something, which is infinitely beautiful, pacifying and liberating.

Listen ! and you will grasp the mystery of the green woods, the great secret of Nature.

. . . How I have let myself go ! Unexpectedly. I have been carried away and found myself in the throes of creation. . . . I felt all that I was writing, and it was not only remembrance, but a real living feeling that I was trying to express in words.

For me my words are alive. If only I could make them live for others.

Kieff-Paris

Is it possible that this fire, that my deep love for nature, burns within me in vain? I so want to believe in myself that I seek everywhere for confirmation. And to-day I believe.

I must stop, I am not tired and could, I think, go on writing for a long time. But, on the other hand, somehow I do not want to come down to earth. . . .

What a wonderful evening I have had. . . . Full of beauty and poetry. So wonderfully far from reality.

26TH MARCH. The general situation is full of uncertainty. As a consequence there is a feeling of insecurity which creates an atmosphere of dread if one pauses to reflect upon it.

Time goes, but there is no glimmer of light. . . .

I cannot help reasoning a little from my individual point of view; and it is all condensed into one question: Will the Bolsheviks leave Kieff or will they remain? There is a saying that there is no fire without smoke, and everybody is asserting on reliable authority that "they" will soon depart. The Poles, or the Germans, or the Ukrainians are already nearing Kieff, and it is only a question of days. Days . . . but that is what people have been saying ever since "they" came, and, involuntarily, one loses hope. Moreover, it seems that they are near Odessa! Only the future can show what will happen. In the meantime one must plod on.

If they remain I simply cannot imagine what we

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shall do when my studies end in the summer. How shall we join Father? Or will it go on as it is now?

What will happen to us, as well as to all the M—family in the winter? But then one imagines that such uncertainty cannot go on for ever and that some solution must be found to that question. If only one could *see* the future (as in Moscow).

Yes, I am fully convinced that there must be a rift in the clouds. Warsaw-Paris seems the shortest cut to personal safety, just to get to Poland. But if the Poles enter Kieff? Perhaps this would be best for us and yet one wishes that Russia might altogether dispense with foreign interference.

To-day I seem to have cooled towards France and cannot regard it any longer as the promised land: I have been filling my head with stories of the Paris Commune and these images screen from my sight the country as it is now.

With regard to ourselves, I think a turning point may come, either Odessa or Kieff may fall! All we can say is *nous verrons*.

Thiers' *Revolution* is very well written, and to-day, reading about the September massacres in the prisons, I felt my hair rising with horror, the more so as all this is so like what is happening to us.

To the contemporaries of those people there also seemed no outlet nor future. For them there was none, but time passed, I cannot even say that centuries passed—the country revived and on the ruins of the old life rose the structure of the new. . . .

Kieff-Paris

As I said last year, the question is simply whether we shall be able to survive this period, which to us represents the whole of life, but for the country is only an episode of history, transient like everything else.

1ST APRIL. I write with desperate irregularity, but have so many duties apart from my diary that I cannot find time for it.

The formidable events of our Revolution run their course. Every day one hears fresh reports about the position of our rulers, but one sees nothing and all remains as it was. What is going to happen? The historical perspective is cut off from our vision more than it ever was before : and only those who survive the present nightmare will know the destiny of our country, and it seems to me, even of mankind.

I have been reading the history of the great French Revolution, and am still doing so. By this object lesson I realize how much history helps me to grasp existing facts : the horrors of the September days have risen before my eyes in all their nakedness : in them I have seen the reflection of the present, and the past has merged with it in terrifying pictures.

The presentment of " sanguinary and chaotic " France has taken the place of that dream, which lured me formerly. Involuntarily, in my thoughts I compared the present with the past : life seemed to the citizens of the great French Republic and especially to the representatives of the aristocracy, as

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it does to us, hopeless and devastating ; they could not foresee what would happen to them in the future as their stormy present circumscribed their horizon. However, only a century and a half have passed since then, and France has risen from the ashes of the destructive fire. She has lifted herself above many of the other nations and has become one of the foremost Powers of the world.

Will this not also happen with Russia ? The present is but a link in the chain of the Infinite. Time will pass, and what means *everything* to us will only become an historical reminiscence.

Russia, one way or the other, will survive the storm, and we are the only ones who may be swept away on the waters of this rushing torrent, which cleanses the earth from harmful strata. One's heart lightens when one reflects quietly and gets a clear idea of this ; sometime the end must come, and in expectation of it, we must live as well as we can. Considered thus, even the Soviets and the Bolsheviks lose their terrors. Sometime everything will return to a normal state, and will "shake down" again. We shall live and wait. Only we must not give up our private life. For the moment I have the Gymnasium—afterwards ?

It will seem strange in later days to read in school books about the revolution, when memory of it alone survives. . . . But in spite of all consoling theories, I should like to see this future period through the evidence of my own eyes. . . . Let us hope that it will come.

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Something more. In examining the life of my schoolfellows I see that for them the present has no such critical importance as it has for me—let alone my people : for the latter it is only an outward form by which their private life is surrounded. This form can change, but it exercises no paramount influence over them : whether the power rests with the Hetman, the Bolsheviks or the adherents of Petliura, they pursue the even tenor of their ways. This is specially felt in the case of these masses of inhabitants who live under the Soviets : the masses do not contemplate, or rather do not consider for a moment, the possibility of departure.

When one thinks about all this, the present no longer seems so awe-inspiring and one only wishes to see the definite “formation” of the future. So our life goes on, driven by general events. It seems even difficult to imagine it otherwise.

There are days—at present I am in such a mood—when Odessa, our journey, and all that lies ahead of us, is wrapped in a kind of fog. There remains only the present—and that is Kieff.

The Bolsheviks have made themselves strongly felt in the life of the Gymnasium : school marks are abolished, the students take part in the teachers' council, but this is all temporary, their ultimate intention being to found a “united labour school.” . . .

10TH APRIL. I am sorry, very sorry, that I have not written for so long. But this is the first day

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that I have had a little time to myself. And how happy I am !

When one studies so much, one wishes sometimes to throw up everything in order to live a few days for oneself, and to devise plans for spending one's time in a sensible way. Big, all-embracing, plans. And when the moment comes, behold ! there is no time left, for I have wasted it on trifles or have simply read without stopping.

. . . Spring is on its way. Bright and joyous, as it ever is. The air fills one with energy and happiness, and aspirations towards the distant, the unknown.

The streams run noisily, sputtering about the coming resurrection of Nature.

And the sun, the sun ! . . . It shines so radiantly, so luminously. . . .

To-day is alarming for everybody, but especially for the Jews. It is nearly certain that there was a " pogrom " in the Podol. We do not know details as yet. Now it appears that all is quiet. It is also rumoured that there has been an uprising of the workmen against the Bolsheviks—some say a revolt of the peasants. . . .

What can be worse than a pogrom ? I cannot imagine, for it is something ghastly. Thinking about it, I picture to myself the scenes of plunder, murder : I see how they drag people along, taunting them with blows and insults.

In these days especially one feels the whole weight of our abnormal epoch. Better not to think about

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the morrow. One shivers when one does, for there is no light, nothing. . . .

Odessa has fallen. So at least the B.U.P. (Ukrainian Press Bureau) tells us. At first no one would believe it : now, one is forced to do so.

What will happen next ? Will the Allies allow Russia to manage her own affairs, or will they enter the arena once more ? Is Bolshevism going to spread to other countries, or will Russia remain the only sufferer ?

Has the Council of Four actually recognized the Russian Federative Republic of the Soviets, and are peaceful relations to be established or will something new and entirely unprecedented take place ? No one is able to foretell.

But with every day we are moving forward on the road of history, therefore it seems to me that uncertainty cannot last much longer.

For Russia, the ideal would be to be left alone by *all* the foreigners. I realize this more completely when I read about the great French Revolution, for it must not be forgotten that, if considered from the historical point of view, revolution is a transient phenomenon.

For our country, also, there will come an end to this time of chaos : she will recover from it. And if strangers interfere now in our internal affairs, we shall have to pay dearly for it. May Russia, fighting her way through these times, be guided by the Russian spirit, and strike out a new independent path for herself.

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This *will* be without a doubt, but how will it be? If one could but lift the veil which hides the future. . . .

This would also be to the advantage of the private individual, for it would be possible to leave Russia with the feeling that his country had been given the chance to straighten her difficulties. But departure and emigration do not sound right when one considers that thousands remain behind in torment. . . . It is painful to feel that one leaves one's native land, breaking with everything and everybody, in order to flee to a strange country.

This is very unpleasant, but it is only at odd moments that one reasons thus : generally, discouragement with the present and the yearning for quietness and beauty get the upper hand over one's scruples : the consciousness of them is overborne by that thirst for rest, which has taken hold of the worn-out spirit : "No matter," you say to yourself, "no matter, I have no more strength for the struggle."

It seems to me that we shall leave soon : somewhere, in a hidden corner of my heart, I am longing for this, for the journey as well as for that which is probably waiting for us. . . .

This year, spring has a curious effect on me. As usual, it excites me, but, apart from this, the more beautiful the day, the more I want to . . . cry ; it makes me bitterly sad.

I went to the Dniepr. It is already in flood. Up to the very horizon there is a blue sheet of water,

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and only in places sandbanks protrude unsubmerged. A blue spring sky. Fresh, as if it had just laved itself with the dew of spring, the dew of the awakening of nature from her long winter sleep.

A soft breeze, laden with the tender emanations of spring, is blowing. It is so beautiful all around, so spacious and so calm.

Why is human life so restless, so full of agitation ? Why cannot one live in Truth and Beauty ?

There is no poetry in life, no rest, and especially in our times.

I want to cry from sheer helplessness, from sorrow, that there is no magic life of dreams. . . .

These tears are a protest against life, a protest that is both passive and discreditable, but one becomes so tired of living on a volcano, that one weakens involuntarily.

Oh ! to live otherwise ! Again to behold the sea . . . the tumultuous sea. . . . Sometimes I hear its roar and the splashing of its waves. . . .

These tears are not a protest against life generally, but only against the present disquiet and uncertainty.

17TH APRIL. Disgraceful ! Two weeks of freedom and the days are frittered away on trifles, they pass without any mental occupation : I read little ; write still less. . . . I am dissatisfied with myself. But it is difficult to correct this : our existence shapes that way. It is bad, I am so afraid of becoming petty minded.

10th-21st April, 1919

21ST APRIL. To-day I am in a confused mood and so I have taken up my diary. Everything is bad.

A wire has been received from Odessa that Sasha-Ira have gone to Paris, and Father is returning one of these days. It is both vexatious and painful to reflect that we could have got away also. Thank God that they are there : I am happy for them.

If one thinks about it, why should it be bad here for us ? If conditions were normal, we also could live here happily, gaily. Oh if only they were normal ! . . . Everything would be different, but it is not worth while to talk about it, so let it go. What is there to regret ? One can neither undo nor recall the past. One must accept all as it comes.

There is something in me about which no one knows. I often think about L.A. There ! . . . I have written his name and experience a disturbing sensation, and, at the same time, I like to pause to think of him. I know little of his spiritual side, but for some unknown reason he attracts me immensely. Sometimes I feel an intense wish for his presence. And often, or rather always when I think of him, I seem to know that some day he will play a part in my life as well as his family : that they will have a great importance for me. So it seems to me sometimes and my thoughts carry me into the future.

What will it be ?

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Afterwards. “To live ! We shall live and from Fate shall wrest but one spring, one fleeting instant.” Thus begins a lovely song. . . . To live : to breathe in the aroma of life with all one’s strength. . . .

But in reality what is life ? What is man ?

Life is a continual struggle with victories and defeats, and with one positive result—Death.

But even if the struggle is heavy and continuous, in this reside the charm and fascination of life. . . .

Science, humanity, creative power. . . . The scope for them is found, given the will and the desire. All the life that surrounds them is calling out to them.

Youth is bold and self-reliant. All the world belongs to us. Others have not had the strength, but I have enough. I shall have the strength to fight prejudice, routine, evil-mindedness.

I know that all who have been young have thought so, and then with the years, the routine has sucked them under ; I know all this, but all the same I believe ardently, boldly in myself.

My future is wide as the sea, which I so much love.

When I think about my plans and my beliefs, I should like the time to come more quickly in order to see whether I shall accomplish all I am hoping for, and fulfil my own ideals.

Free love (without marriage) strong and powerful ! Life in the midst of chosen people. An activity

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that is alive and productive for the good of others, to whom I want to devote myself.

Can it be that these are all words? "A naïve children's fairy tale?" Oh, it cannot be. This is what I believe. And I am only fifteen. My whole life is before me. My future cannot be wrecked because of the terrible present. It is fully mine. There is no cause for despair. Two years . . . three . . . and if the opportunity does not offer, I shall make it, I shall attain it. . . .

In the meantime, one must actively prepare for it in order to show oneself worthy of such a life.

To rest, to work . . . not to despair, to believe.

What is love? I did not answer this question before. Unquestionably, in its depths this is a purely physiological and unconscious phenomenon—let us say like some physical pain. . . . But, in reality, love acquires, as does physical pain, a tremendous importance for man.

I should like to read a natural explanation of what people call love. . . . It would be very interesting.

Tolstoy calls it a physical attraction of sexes and says that in time it will disappear. The first is correct; the second, I do not know.

But, however much people may argue, they are all subject to it. His turn comes, and "man" according to the expression of Tchehov, "ceases to understand what love means but submits to it."

Love. . . . It must be beautiful and poetic.

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People say that it is the best in life. They say that through its agency everything in life is transformed, everything is illuminated. They say and they write. . . .

Sometimes when I think about it, I am seized with terror that I do not recognize it ; and bitterness and suffering play havoc with my soul.

I do not understand this fully ; but even if it is an attraction between sexes, a physiological process, both books and life graft in us an unaccountable yearning for it, it exists in me apart from my will.

In any case, love must and can only be an appendix to life, it certainly must not form its substance. Pitiful are those for whom that is the case. Thank God that is not so with me.

Does eternal love exist ? I don't know. There are many examples in history, but I do not know that there are any *en masse*. At least, in conjugal life, love turns into a habit.

And it is a good thing if it does so. In many cases I have seen enmity and hatred spring up often between husband and wife. It is what is called "family happiness !" . . . And, on the other hand, the ties created by the children, or something else, habit, are too strong and they go on dragging the shackles of their grey, melancholy existence.

Let us admit that love is due to a certain organic excitement. . . . It has passed, but what can be better if habit remains in its stead between those

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whom it has brought together. They are united by mutual consent, by friendship, by the community of their interests : but how often are these absent and marriage takes place all the same ? I do not understand how this can be without mutual attraction ?

Therefore, from marriage there remains only the outward form without any substance. It does not prevent illegitimate love, but only increases the evil and the immorality. But if it is only a husk, let it be removed from life.

I am unquestionably *against* marriage.

The ideal is to live in separate houses ; the children with the mother.

It seems to me that in such conditions love must be more beautiful and more attractive : it always leaves something unexplored and, through this, entices.

And for this reason also I should like to experience love in order to know whether I shall act as I believe I should now.

“ What holds the coming day for us ? ” (Poushkin).

22ND MAY. Yes, yes, I have not written for a whole month. . . . Why ? I do not know. I have been leading a feckless kind of life, occupied with many things and, whenever I had a free moment, I picked up a book.

Much has happened in the interval and to-day especially there is much I want to say—a passionate

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desire to relieve my soul of the impressions that have been accumulating during the last days.

To-day Mummie told me that we shall probably go to the Crimea in two weeks or so, to winter there.

. . . .

It seems to me that happiness has become close and possible.

Oh, if this could be more than empty talk. If only for my sixteenth birthday we could find ourselves under the blue sky of the South, on the sea coast. If only. . . .

When I begin to think at times it hurts me that I am still here, for my longing is all for the Crimea, the sea, the sun, the south. . . .

The latest information is that life there is cheap and quiet. Perhaps we shall rest there and become ourselves again.

To the sea, to the sea !

There the prosaic crust, which time has spread over us, will disappear ; the beauty of what is surrounding us will renew my soul.

At times, I forget this longing, but to-day after Mummie's talk with me, I am again straining to get there.

We shall see, we shall see, we shall see. . . .

The farther we go the stronger we feel the influence of our epoch in more senses than one. It is very positive : it has made me reflect on many important questions, like Socialism and others ; it has shown me the real object of life and has widened my horizon ; it has made me more " practical," more " positive,"

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for everyday life, and has prepared me better for its different emergencies.

Between the former "Miss Nelly" and the present pupil of the carpenter Ivan Ivanitch there is a great difference, especially spiritually.

All this is good, and I am grateful to time for the way it has helped my development. But it has also done something else : all that belonged to the azure realm of dreams and visions, the world of poetry—and there was a great deal of it—has hidden itself in the depths of my soul.

27TH MAY. What is this love about which people write and speak so much ? Shall I ever know it ? And if not, will my life remain incomplete ; shall I experience the weariness of spirit of those who abide in loneliness ? Probably yes. When I return home in the evening tired out by the tasks of the day, at times I shall feel sad and depressed. . . .

Love . . . love . . . when will it come ?

But one must not abandon oneself to such sorrow about something that is undefined. . . . There is no room for it in our hard-working life, which is but a preparation. Yes, one must renounce that which is too emotional. There is no need for these moods, this longing, these *attendrissements* Work is waiting for us.

These are not high-flown words, nothing conventional . . . I feel what I write and it costs me a certain effort to consent to all this. Because it represents the total sacrifice of personal happiness,

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and because I believe that I shall have the necessary strength to make it.

Perhaps this self-pity is too banal.

Alas, these are all dreams. . . . I don't know what the future has in store for me, but in the meantime it is absorbing my life. . . .

An historical period is decidedly interesting, but still . . . one would like also to enjoy life a little. . . . How I want it at times !

. . . I wish to read a great deal this summer, both novels and specialized books. My library (Idzikovzky) is unfortunately shut, and they have wonderful catalogues on all subjects, but it will re-open soon. I am also learning shorthand. I began to-day. It is really art for art's sake, but it may prove useful in school next year, and it is a good thing to know it.

The fashion has started to engage on some form of paid work. But for the moment I am financially secure, and therefore do not attempt it, but want to take up public work instead : a relative of ours, a delightful girl, is going to work at a school in two weeks' time, and has promised to find a job there for me. Just what I should like.

So that in a way I am not thinking about the winter. We shall see. If politically it is the same as now, it will be very, very bad, for in Moscow and Petrograd people, so we hear, are *swelling* from hunger.

But it is being stated quite definitely that the "climate" is going to change. On the whole, I

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seem to have grown calmer. I don't know ; perhaps it is only for the moment.

The French Revolution, by Thiers, has been of great assistance to me.

The style is very good ; not at all dry ; but vivid in places, and full of colour, which makes the book readable and helps one to get through it quickly. But this is not the chief attraction of this book.

My people want very much to leave, and, to be quite frank, so do I.

Quite a new development. Father makes himself extremely busy with plans for departure. And here also, the only thing is to wait.

Meanwhile, I shall try to carry out as conscientiously as possible my summer programme.

It is curious to reflect on all that this life of hardship has taught me during the last two years. . . . Without them I might have become a blind little Chinese idol. . . .

Yes, life has set its seal upon me and for the moment I regret nothing ; for it has made me into a human being who is incomparably fitter for life and stronger than formerly.

In spite of it the wonderful fire of feeling for beauty lives on in my heart and sometimes it takes precedence over all my reasonings about the azure sea.

30TH MAY. I wanted terribly to write yesterday, but when I made up my mind to sit down " they " went to sleep in my room and I had nowhere else to write.

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. . . Thank Heaven I have begun to read more. I am reading French and Russian. In Russian, *The Chronicles of the Gorbatov Family*; I enjoy it. The passages dealing with important historical personalities are especially interesting. And I have made up my mind to read more historical novels this summer.

A wonderful science, history ! And what emotions one must experience on finding oneself face to face with the traces of antiquity, for instance like the excavations at Pompeii. . . .

How delightful it is to be morally satisfied with oneself ! . . . Probably I am at the age when one begins to think about love. I do not know how it is with others, but this thought sometimes haunts me. I am seeking love quite unconsciously in what is surrounding me, sometimes even where it cannot possibly exist . . . it is stupid, perhaps wrong, but it is so. . . .

"Mummie, what is love, without which people say life cannot be complete ? What is it ? Is it really such a radiant thing ?" I asked Mummie a few days ago in an excess of frankness and expansion. "Yes," she replied and talked a little on this subject.

But, all the same, I still do not know the meaning of love. I try to, but simply cannot understand this feeling.

How can something that is instinctive, sexual, physiological, colour life so brightly and stand higher than career, principles, mind and conscience ?

No, no one can answer this, and until I have ex-

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perienced myself the enchantment of this feeling, no one can explain it to me.

But, when, when? And will that "when" in general materialize?

I am unable to write more to-day. . . .

I have been thinking about L.A. It always seems to me that we shall meet in life, that we shall be near to each other. . . .

And Mummie also thinks of him for me; she does not mention this, but I know.

Is this not a coincidence? It is a pity that we know each other so little. Especially that he knows so little of me.

1ST JUNE. To-day I decidedly long for my diary. The dear . . . how good it is to have it.

There is much I want to chat about, but shall I have time? I shall begin with the most important.

The other calm life is so far from me that I can no longer picture it to myself. . . . Was it a dream of that which is past, or is it a dream of that which is happening now?

I shall wake, it will be morning! We are in Saratoff, at home, and all that we have gone through has never existed.

How much that is strange there is in life. . . . Can it be that something so different as the past and the present can be contained in one single life? What gibberish! What absurdity!

That past *was*, in fact it existed: it formed my life;

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it was something full and complete. It meant everything.

When, some time hence, I am a real person, a finished woman, not the incomplete morsel I still am now, my present years will appear to me just as distant. How strange that is again ! Will the time come when I shall be quite grown up, as they all are ?

Yes, whatever influence events may have, time goes on, and I am getting ever nearer to life.

The years will pass ; whatever the general conditions may be, I shall grow up, if *only* I remain alive. . . .

Everything is transient, this is the purport of my philosophy. Last year in Moscow I passed through a storm, everything was black ; I despaired, seeing no issue, but now I could no longer react to the situation with the same burning intensity.

Whether it is apathy or the result of reading Thiers I do not know, but it seems to me that the present life is simply a question of time. We have only to remain alive, and the rest will right itself in the end.

No, really it is strange. In eighteen days I shall be sixteen. In 1903 a tiny animal-like being made its appearance in the world. The years have passed. It has transformed itself into a fifteen-year-old girl, with all the seeds of her future already ripening. Years will pass. She will become a woman. . . . and the present will seem far away.

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One must feel this to understand it. . . . The wheel of life rolls ceaselessly onwards.

We shall die and others will replace us. . . . But life will go on.

Is it possible that I was an unconscious baby at one time, and that I shall yet become something to whom the present will appear like a distant childhood. I am repeating myself, but it is so strange when I think of it.

I have a leaning towards such general considerations. I do not know their scientific name. Still the gist of this is that time will smooth out our difficulties. One must only learn to wait.

How good it would be to find oneself suddenly far from here. But what is the use of thinking about it? It is true one can live and wait at the same time. . . . But I have no energy to think about this . . . I have no more strength left for enthusiasm. . . .

Under the influence of this state of mind, I was longing this morning for something measured, monotonous, without vivid colours or bright hues, and I felt deeply the tie which binds man to nature.

If there had been sun, a blue sky, I should have gone out and the hot rays would have infused new vigour into me. But it was raining. From early morning there had been a fine unceasing drizzle. It was grey and monotonous, as I wanted it to be. Sometimes there came a heavy downpour, sometimes the rain stopped altogether. I felt the mad desire to put on old clothes, ram a cap on my head and go

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wandering about aimlessly. . . . To stride across the quiet streets with their rows of trees and their emptiness. . . . To walk, without noticing where my feet were carrying me, slowly, like an automaton. . . . And suddenly I would have caught myself—not walking—but standing still . . . heedless of the noises of the street . . . I come back to reality and go on. . . . And the rain drips and drips. . . .

This would certainly have encouraged my mood, while my aim was to conquer it.

But these various manifestations of “the languor of spirit” are such that every time it hurts me to destroy them with prose. I shall probably be a very eccentric person if, when I grow up, I remain the plaything of my moods. But I shall certainly remain a slave to my inclination for writing.

3RD JUNE. Yes, for the time being my mood rarely triumphs over my feelings. But I must prepare myself for life. I should like to be even-tempered, always well-disposed. To express neither joy nor sorrow. But that is not within my power at present. Later . . . *nous verrons*. . . . Of course, I went nowhere, but out of desperation began to read. I wanted neither the *Revolution* nor a Russian book out of the library. I rummaged in the bookcase and found *The Secret of a Buffoon*, by Slyozkin, and *The Victory of the Woman*,¹ by Locke. The first I swallowed in half an hour ;

¹ *The Glory of Clementina Wing.*

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but I spent a whole day over the latter, lying on my bed. Locke left a stronger impression, because he strikes a deep and familiar note.

Clementina is a professional painter, careless of outward appearances, and the special interest of the story lies in the emotional moments of her life : her transformation into Clementina—the woman, who at once rises above her surroundings ; and her self-sacrifice when love, for which she waited patiently, at last comes to her.

All this seemed familiar, even more—akin to me. I often noticed these traits in myself, and my pleasure therefore was very great. My only criticism would be that the change in Clementina is too abrupt to be quite natural. . . .

Yesterday or to-day the significance of the title *The Victory of the Woman* became manifest to me. It is not only the victory of Clementina over Ephraim and Lina, it is in the main the victory of feminine instinct over the rough exterior which she had assumed after the blow dealt to her in her first love affair. This is—the victory of the woman ! However, though she was strong at the beginning Clementina surrendered after all. “ Sex hangs on the spirit.”

I sympathized with the process of her becoming feminized, but it is vexatious that the “ human being ” should have been so easily defeated. This is weakness. Though in what does it consist ? Clementina will not let herself be engulfed by the mediocrity of her surroundings. Mentally she is

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superior to it, and must manage her life accordingly. Art cannot be stifled within her. True, her family will come first, but Clementina will see that everything drops into its right place.

Can one demand that love for home and family should be extinguished ? The dreams about " one's own " are so sweet.

Yes, Clementina stands acquitted in my sight : is not the ideal of a woman to be a woman and a sensible human being at the same time ? But how translate this ideal into everyday life ? How shall I set about it ?

From the beginning of time, the duties between man and woman have been divided thus ; that he, the stronger physically, should carry the weight of providing for the material needs of his family, while her department is the home and children.

Probably from a physiological point of view, as well as from a spiritual one, woman is built differently from man ; there is more softness in her.

It is absurd to say that Nature has made man and woman equal.

Therefore I make bold to affirm that it is not right entirely to forsake the duties which Nature has entrusted to us. It would be interesting to see a dwelling deprived of the care of feminine hands. The habitation of a man who is single can always be recognized : it is only the presence of a woman which can bring warmth and add those trifles which are essential for beauty and comfort.

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But the mind of woman calls her, like that of man, to a sphere of learning.

In this there is *no* difference between them. We are as gifted for learning as men and we want to learn. Only the misguided education of centuries has thrust woman back, has encouraged coquetry, affectation in her. Give us the chance to learn and we shall show you that in reality we are no less intelligent than men. But it is not only a matter of "learning" but of "education," and it is the spirit of the latter which must change.

I have drifted far from my theme and have not answered the question which I put to myself.

Woman must devote herself to her family and the education of her children, which is so important for the future of the race ; but she must not make the sacrifice of the aspirations, which are calling to her. Each woman has her sphere : the one is an actress, the other a painter ; one is a social worker, another the bearer of new thought. . . . There are many paths. . . .

Home duties leave much leisure, it is good to make the most of it.

Yet, this is extremely difficult to carry out in life. All these activities demand the *whole* of one, not a part, but we must attain the achievement of our ideal.

And this is feasible. If a woman is a doctor, she must find some one to take care of her children and her house. . . . Those who are able to create must do no manual work.

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5TH JUNE. Summer. I hardly study at all. Only music and reading foreign languages, very interesting. However, nearly the whole day is occupied : at least it is strictly divided : till dinner, the round of ordinary duties, afterwards the time is my own to do with as I like.

But I am not satisfied with this : I am only able to squeeze in some reading and a walk, for which I have set apart no less than two hours. But as well as this I must read in French and I want to write in my diary.

What do I do in my working hours ? Shorthand, music, the school magazine. There is moreover absorbing housework : in the morning, doing the rooms ; in the day and the evening, the preparations for dinner and supper. This takes quite a lot of time, which I only partially regret.

Our present life, with the greater demands it makes on us as regards the necessities of every day, has greatly developed me. Why ? Because poverty is the most stern, yet the most efficient task-master.

If these cares did not exist, I should relinquish myself completely to spiritual life ; but taken on the whole, that would not be useful : it is a good thing that I can adapt myself to everything easily and that work has no terrors for me.

But personally I shall grow. There is no question of pampering myself. Whatever the material conditions may be I shall find my bearings, and I should like to retain my simplicity, even if my surroundings were to be luxurious. And therefore I

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shall be morally justified in unburdening myself of part of my household duties, as in my free time I never refuse to take my share of them. Physical labour renews and lightens the soul to an extraordinary degree. I suppose that one must educate children on the principle of "help thyself," taken broadly in the sense of physical effort.

6TH JUNE. My magic song about our departure. When it approaches everything seems radiant and shining in bright rosy colours, I yield so quickly to hope. How many times have we already "gone away," but now again I have begun hoping.

To-day is Sunday and on Friday there is a good chance of going abroad. Father will begin to take steps to-morrow. May be. . . . But I no longer believe.

From here to Gomel by ship. Then by train to Mozir Luninets. Then with horses across the Front, people say it is quite easy. After that Warsaw—Paris. When I think of all this and remember that we shall start in a few days, I want to rub my eyes, to open them wider, feeling that this new thing cannot find its fulfilment quite so quickly. And suddenly, one month, another. . . .

We shall see now : each day will bring something new.

To-morrow, the day after to-morrow, we shall have our permits. . . . No it cannot be.

Can it be possible that I shall find myself in Paris,

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the centre of a totally new life ? Is it not a dream ? If only it does not dissolve in smoke. . . .

“ If ” . . . after a summer spent happily on the coast when we have recovered from all this and got accustomed to the bright happiness of a new, peaceful existence (for light always blinds you after darkness) I want to go to school to England, and finish my education there ; English education corresponds to my ideal more than any other.

Afterwards ? Thanks to my English training, fittingly prepared for life, I shall bravely walk along my ordained path.

I don't know whether to leave it at that ? Perhaps yes, and perhaps no. I want to travel all over the world, then to settle down in Moscow and devote myself wholly to those who suffer and are oppressed. “ Let such a life be mine.”

The thought about our impending departure is sustaining my spirits wonderfully. I believe, I dream, I am in Paris, and Rouen, and London . . . I think about nothing else.

Some days ago we went into the fields, Lelia and I, beyond the town, not very far from us.

When you live in Town you respond with extraordinary zest to the approach of nature. We went out by the backyards of the railway quarter.

It was strange to have just left behind us the noisy, overcrowded streets, and to find ourselves in the heart of nature.

There are many such strange things in the world. Our horizon was fringed by the hills, which were

5th—22nd June, 1919

either ploughed or covered with a thick green carpet. We climbed a hillock and looked round us.

Somewhere, at our back on the horizon, the steppe seemed to prop the sky and in front, behind the fields which we had traversed, Kieff lay spread out before our gaze.

What a wonderful view it was. On the one side, the small houses smothered in verdure ; on the other, the immense stone buildings of the city, with the cupolas of its churches shining like molten gold. . . .

The town embraces us on three sides, gradually dwindling away until it merges into the fields.

Such space . . . such freedom . . . I love this in a landscape. It seemed to me that my heart was bursting with its tremor.

We lay down on the grass and then we had the impression that we were looking downwards from above.

It seemed unbelievable that we had come over there where the horizon touches the earth and appears to be so far away.

We became as one with the field. I felt that the theory of one single soul belonging to all the world was being justified : I dissolved in what was around me and gathered it up within myself.

It was the first time this year that we had been close to nature, and probably for this reason it was exceptionally wonderful.

What will happen to-morrow ?

22ND JUNE. I write so seldom, but this is the

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principal reason : my life is too erratic. I make plans, but they only last a day or two . . . then some new nonsense begins. I have lost myself. And in the evening, I hold no perspective of the day that has just gone. When will there be an end to this? And it will end, because probably we are at last going away, unless something political prevents us. The permits are useful and cleverly planned : we may say that we have nearly got them, and as soon as Father has finished with his affairs . . . would that he got them over quickly, remembering the principle, "strike while the iron is hot." Will this really materialize at last? Will there come a time in the near future when the present is only a memory? Am I not delirious? When I think that this is only a question of days I experience a feeling that is really like delirium. . . .

Last week I was sixteen. It was a happy, pleasant day : from all sides so much love and sympathy was lavished upon me that a thousand voices sang and rejoiced in my heart. This love of my near ones is more precious than noisy visitors and festivities.

On the evening of that day, I wanted to write in my diary to have the joy of dwelling on it, but then I was caught in the whirl and had to give it up.

Sixteen. . . . Two more years, and I shall be on the threshold of that life which attracts me so inexpressibly.

What am I now? And what shall I become? At present I am still young, fermenting wine, which, I think, is not altogether of bad quality at the bottom.

22nd-28th June, 1919

But I really hold in myself all the seeds of my future being. I shall try to define myself.

Am I clever? Really, I do not know. Remarkable? Not stupid, surely. Very gifted? I have a leaning towards eloquence. Perhaps talent for writing, which may develop. But all this is dull. The most divergent and contradictory qualities live in me side by side. I love all that is beautiful and am often influenced by feeling, become softened and utterly forget that man has another mentor—his mind.

In a week we leave.

28TH JUNE. Why do I write now so seldom?

Yes, I am quite lost to myself. I live aimlessly, without a programme of reading. The *French Revolution* is forsaken. And the cause of all this is our departure, or rather, the indefinite situation which is bound up with it. It is still neither yes nor no, and that tortures me.

Quicker. . . . oh, I do not know what should be quicker? But this week the question will surely be decided.

I have discovered that I am a dreamer: until now our journey was my pet dream, to-day when I was returning with Lelia, I was on the contrary planning what I would do if we remained here and the general situation did not change. And I worked myself up into such a state of dreaminess that I clearly visualized it all. It was so lovely. . . .

. . . It is, I think, the first summer that we have

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spent in town, without any thought of going to the country.

Twice we have been out in the fields, "we" means Lelia and I. We both love and understand nature and each other.

Another time we went to an oak forest. . . . Oh, how the wind sings among the trees . . . how wonderful is the verdure. . . . Wherever one looks, nothing but the woods, the woods, the woods. . . .

3RD JULY. If there are days when there is nothing to record in my beloved book, there are others when I simply do not know what to do with myself. On such days I notice with pleasure that I have grown up, and when I think that it is only a year and a half since I was comparatively a complete child, it seems a strange thought to reflect that when I am seventeen I shall remember the present as something quite distant. And then I understand that seventeen, eighteen is golden youth, with its magic dreams of love, and that now, though only two years separate me from it, the time for love is not yet.

One must look more at the blue sky and revel in nature ; then greater strength will be found to await the future. During the last days I have become calmer and look bravely ahead. Moreover the conditions round us are changing.

In Moscow politics formed the nucleus of my diary : here you come rarely in contact with them

28th June—4th July, 1919

and only in exceptional cases : then private life did not exist, but here one's life is filled with one's own interests and pushes the other into the background.

In the course of the last week the map has completely altered : Crimea is cut off by the English : on the east, Tsaritsin has been taken ; on the west, Charkov. Denikin marches on Moscow, or on Kieff . . . it is uncertain which. We hear the Germans and the Poles may be coming here. If not they, then Petliura. In the provinces are brigand bands, in comparison with which our present rulers represent paradise.

The whole of the Russian Revolution can be compared to an abscess, which is gradually ripening. And now it has reached such a stage that its swelling can be clearly observed. Nearly everybody is saying that it is but a question of weeks, and that it will burst. But people thought the same when the Bolshevists entered Kieff. It does seem, though, as if at present there were more ground for the supposition.

4TH JULY. I am now satisfied with myself ; every day after dinner I go to the Botanical Gardens and read there for three hours. . . . It is a pleasant sensation to know that one is filling one's mind.

I read somewhat erratically. I have dropped the *French Revolution*. I am now reading Soloviev, and when I finish the Gorgbatov series, perhaps I shall take up something scientific.

Well, what is love ? Nature or people ? Some-

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thing natural or perverted ? How, and why, is it born ?

Where to find an answer to all this ?

Will it pass me by ? Or shall I learn to know it ?

Oh, future !

I do not believe in a so-called pre-ordained type. But I have convinced myself so often that novels correspond to life that I am afraid to deny this. Probably it may even be true, if they write this. . . .

These last days I have dreamt about an independent life in Moscow as a student. And this at the moment appears more seductive than all the travelling abroad. I shall be endlessly busy ; apart from my regular work I shall not have a free minute, but that is what is so delightful. To be "on my own" in my adored Moscow, to make one of a joyous crowd to spend Christmas in Finland. . . .

Good Lord, will this ever be realized ?

6TH JULY. To-day I think I shall chat for a long time with my diary.

Again there is some talk about departure at the end of the week. I am forcing myself to attach no importance to these conversations and not to build castles in the air. But against my will, as was the case two weeks ago, a bright little flame of hope is again burning in my heart.

"We shall go away. . . . We shall be in Biarritz on the sea coast. . . ." something is singing within me.

No, I do not want to think : I have been deceived

4th-6th July, 1919

so many times. I shall pursue my normal occupations.

Travelling is one of the greatest delights of life ; another is to become acquainted with people. How many interesting impressions one receives from meeting new people and forming fleeting acquaintances, without the dull formality of the drawing room. And from this intercourse spring swarms of new ideas.

Of late I have noticed something that has given me great pleasure. Whether I describe what I have read and seen, or dream aloud, I always manage to express it quite smoothly, even beautifully. At home, at least, they like to hear me airing my opinions. What is it ? A gift for oratory ? Oh how wonderful it is to feel that one has got something that is so good. If only it were that ! It is good for the future, and in every way it is pleasant to feel that one can call it forth at will.

Probably if one looks into the life of each man, it would appear different from that of others.

It is the same thing in our family. A family that seems like any other. But if one probes more deeply, traits and wrinkles appear at once. *En gros et en petit.*

I imagine it would be very interesting to write a chronicle of Mummie's family the M— ; it often seems to me, as a result of the near relationship of some of its members who are closest to me, that this is a family which is like that of the "Gorbatovs"

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where the consciousness of family-unity is still preserved.

I adore listening to tales of ancient family lore, recollections of Mummie's childhood, that of her brothers and sisters, about their marriages, etc. I find this very interesting. Each one in his own fashion. Perhaps I shall write this down some day. . . .

And Grandfather's life when he began from nothing. . . .

9TH JULY. Life passes aimlessly ; a day has passed, and I thank God for it. I read a lot.

I dream a lot too, I always soar in the far off countries of the West, at the sea shore, in an English college. . . . My imagination is strongly developed. Sometimes I seem to feel and hear Paris ; it is needless to say that I clearly visualize the pictures of the future. . . .

I am glad that I have a strong imagination. I had not suspected before that I had it.

But nevertheless my dreams are restrained ; though they are always with me, they are no longer as ardent as they were two or three weeks ago. . . . Then as soon as the word "departure" fell on my ears, my excitement rose to fever pitch. . . . But time goes on . . . so do the conversations. . . .

We are leaving ! We are leaving ! Father is extremely busy and has already obtained some papers. . . .

Next week ! Will it come ? Will the fairy tale

6th-9th July, 1919

turn into reality? Do understand : that other new life is so far away, that I can hardly realize that it is real.

I am counting the days as one passes after another, and I am a little nearer to the object of my hopes.

But enough : I have eased my heart and that is enough for me. Everything will come at its proper moment.

To-day, as often, I feel that I am calm, but not with a grey calm. . . . It is quiet in me. *Sérénité*. All kinds of thoughts. I cannot even tell what they are, but there is no emptiness.

With what tenderness I shall look back on the present life. It will be so far. How good that is !

. . . "All happy families are happy in the same way ; all unhappy ones, each in a way of its own."

And in general, the closer one peers into the life of man, the more individual it seems.

I should like to weave stories, many stories, about what I see around me : and to tell them in such a way that people who read them would see everything vividly before their eyes ; tell them in such a way that the consonance of dead words should come to life from under my pen.

Oh how I want to create, to possess that precious gift of writing. . . . I must have talent for this. I have a few gifts in this direction . . . only they are but matter without the spirit. . . .

Talent, talent, *that* is what I want !

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11TH JULY. It has passed ; only five or ten minutes ago, I was profoundly unhappy. If it passed so quickly it was owing to the pressure I put upon myself. I am pleased that I can control myself so well, but let me start at the beginning.

During dinner the endless conversation about various rumours, the increasing number of departures, the difficulties and dangers of the journey, was resumed. It seems to me at such times that we shall never go away after all. And deep depression falls over my spirits. A complete indifference towards everything. Nobody knows how I keep myself in hand in order to think as little as possible about our departure and especially not to talk about it.

I only put a few questions to Mummie, and she burst out " You worry me, you torment me. . . ." I defended myself. I said that if one wanted " to relieve one's feelings " . . . This word set Mummie laughing. . . . " There is nothing about which to relieve oneself. . . . "

If this had happened earlier, I would probably have complained at once to my diary about being misunderstood, lonely. . . . But this period of sentimentality has passed. I have become a much more sober individual, there is much more dry prose in me. Sometimes, nearly always now, I am even practical. I do not complain about this, but simply note the change.

This remark hurt and upset me atrociously. Formerly I should have indulged in recrimination,

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but now I fought it down ! I quietly reasoned with myself and calmed down.

I want to control myself completely and hope to achieve it.

At present this is impossible as far as joy is concerned, but also is it necessary in such a case ? One need not be effusive, and when things have gone wrong I have noticed lately that little by little I have been improving.

I think that at last we shall go next week.

Why did they laugh ? Can my heart not be heavy ? Or am I still such a child ? However insignificant the cause, yet, *for me* it is—a sorrow. And to laugh was cruel !

My yearning to leave is something morbid, especially of late. It is possible to work here also : I must not dream, not think about it.

On the other hand, my plans in connection with that life are so vast, that it is obvious why I want to go.

Evening. I went to the theatre and therefore was unable to continue. I saw "*La Dame de Pique*," and liked it immensely ; the music is beautiful and so is the theme of the opera. It was such a relief to forget all that is around us for a few hours, and to flee to the enchanting world of poetry and beauty. It was so pleasant to dream to the sound of music during one of the scenes. And I came home happy and joyful.

The best of my golden dreams—a student's life in Moscow ! How wonderful it will be. . . .

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How wonderful it *would* be, if only events permitted. . . . It will come . . it will ! I am only sixteen and all is before me.

Oh Moscow ! Moscow !

My heart feels so warm and light that I do not want to speak of anything gloomy.

We were in the theatre, and before the curtain went up—the lights were already dim—I began to recount to Darling¹ my dreams about Moscow.

It does one good to talk to M.I. ; she takes everything to heart and enters whole-heartedly into my plans.

Mummie is a little jealous of Darling.

“ Tell me . . . but only the truth . . . it is for somebody’s sake that you want to go to Moscow ? Or just in order to be there ? ”

I began to laugh, for this hit the nail straight on the head. It is quite an intangible sensation, because I do not know myself what part “ he ” has in that, but in my Moscow dreams I always invoke the presence of L.A. Always, and always. . . .

The accursed watch. . . . I had just begun to write—and it is time to go to bed.

When I grow up I shall write as late as I please. . . . Well, here goes !

12TH JULY. I am very pleased : the diary has again become a daily necessity to me.

It is good to have a diary !

¹ A friend.

11th—12th July, 1919

Our departure draws nearer. To-morrow is Sunday. We shall leave on Thursday, perhaps even Wednesday.

To-day Father brought very good news: the journey to Mozir is excellent and there seems to be a direct connection between Warsaw and Paris.

My head is in a whirl.

Will this dream be realized? I cannot believe it. Now that after so much shilly-shallying our departure is so near—I do not believe. I want to believe, but I simply cannot, that we are really going.

Is it possible that after all these illusions and disappointments, after the long struggle with oneself, at the last moment all may crumble?

What concern am I of Fate's? What is Fate?

This all rests with chance; they say that Mozir—our chief railway centre—is being evacuated, that perhaps ships can no longer sail.

Oh, God! Is that possible?

Four days more. . . . Can it be that something unforeseen will destroy the plan which at last seemed feasible. . . . I am afraid as I never was before. . . .

And now . . . let me dream . . . we are in Warsaw. . . . There is a direct train for Paris. We are in the train! The clean villages flash past us! . . . Tilled fields. . . . Strange pictures, but pleasant to the eye.

There is a charm in our spaciousness, in our wildness, but we must sacrifice it to progress.

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How great and vast is the world . . . and how small it is. "I am the king ; I am the slave ; I am the worm, and I am God." . . . Is there not enough in this to turn one's head ? Surely.

And it is so curious that on this earth there should be so many different lives. . . . Why go as far as Paris and Kieff. . . . Are there even in Kieff two families that live alike ?

In the house there are thin, wooden partitions which separate absolutely different lives from each other. . . . And each man lives his own individual life. . . . It is one of the many things I cannot realize. . . . It is great, immense. . . . That which belongs to the world and to nature is too great for our weak comprehension. . . .

What will happen ? What will happen ?

In three weeks I may still be in Kieff, or in some Wilna, or we may be killed. . . . We shall see. . . . If only the ships are allowed to sail. . . . It is for the moment all I wish for.

Such a wonderful evening. How not to hope and not to believe ? It was vain to think that I should soon return to a normal state of mind.

15TH JULY. Oh, these conversations ! However much one may be accustomed to them, however much one may try to convince oneself that they are rubbish . . . when you hear . . .

Dinner-time has turned into a nightmare : they begin to talk, each giving his opinion as to the unfavourable chances of the journey, and I can see

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hesitation on the faces of my parents. . . . To-day I was thoroughly upset : I thought they were going to give up the whole plan, and I felt so bitter and wretched. I was racked by anger at their weakness. . . .

My poor illusions, my poor dreams . . . will perish. . . . It was a trifling reason, but when I found myself alone, I burst into tears. Soon, however, they ceased. I decided that I had calmed down, but after about ten minutes I began to cry again, and this went on for a long time. . . .

It is painful to feel that all the hopes one had been fondling are about to disappear like a mirage at the moment when you think you are at last going to grasp it. . . .

Thrice unlucky thought of departure ! . . . It has taken root in me, and to its alluring melody the most wonderful dreams were materializing. . . .

I do nothing : the last days, I even no longer want to read, life around me is too absorbing.

. . . .

I have suffered, and have observed that when a person is closely affected by some matter, he becomes indifferent to others, and egoistical. That is, the majority. There are also exceptions, but in reality this is a common occurrence : if one "reasons," only a few stand above this.

I returned to-day from somewhere, full of gloomy reflections that weighed heavily on me. Mummie told me that she has heard of the death of a girl friend of ours, from L.

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It is a shame to confess that my first thought, and not even a thought, but the words which flashed through my mind were : "That means no cinema !" But I was sincerely sorry, I regret her. Only "passively," "as a second thought" ; this is natural, though it sounds cold.

Yes, I am sorry, very sorry for this young girl, but it is so distant that my regrets, though they are sincere, are colder than they would have been had we been together this last year and a half.

Now all this is over. I am quieter and could write a great deal . . . there is no time. Generally speaking we are no more advanced than we were before as regards our journey. . . .

I have been feeble and have yielded to that which I successfully fought yesterday . . . a moment's weakness.

31ST JULY. Again I have been too long silent. Though for the first few days I have wanted to write and could not.

To-day a complete upheaval has taken place, and what was near has definitely receded into the distance. . . .

1ST AUGUST. A minute is often enough to change the life of man completely. This is what has happened to us : these days have brought so much that is new . . . and bad !

They say that the last days of the Bolsheviks are at hand. The evacuation is to take place in five

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days. It is easy to gather from the newspapers that they are in a bad way. And how much remains unsaid !

For the moment, I shall only record the most important things.

The persecution of separate individuals has begun again, we are of the number. They are looking for us everywhere, and such is the disorganization that they cannot find us, though we have been registered for the last six months. They came to Father's brother ; led by a very handsome youth, a former hairdresser. He was extremely rude and of an impudence that passed belief.

"What is your maiden name?" he asked Aunt.

"L—tz." "I do not understand." He shrugged his shoulders. For a long time he tried to find out our address. He did not get it.

"We have quarrelled and we never meet." . . .
"All right, then, sign the paper."

"I, the undersigned, bind myself not to warn my brother. In case of non-compliance, I make myself amenable to all the penalties of the law." Uncle became anxious. "What penalties?" "So that's it!" The detective was wild with anger. "You come with me to the Tche-Ka," and carried him off there and then.

The terrified family gave our approximate address ; however, nothing has happened up to now. Uncle is in prison. They even wanted to put him on to road-mending.

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Of course, they are trying to liberate him, b-b-but . . . Father has been ill. . . . To-morrow he goes into the private hospital, and of this the Tche-Ka will probably be informed ; no, this plan has been given up after all. Nobody really knows how to free Uncle.

It seems to me that Father's plain duty would have been to notify his whereabouts. Why should Uncle be made to suffer ? This is my objection.

It is dishonest to let one's brother come to grief for one's sake. This is the first impulse. But on thinking it over, uncle is quite innocent and even " they " must see this. Moreover, steps are being taken to liberate him, and it is inevitable that in a day or two they will let him go, whereas Father has much more to fear.

So it seems to me that this is the conclusion we can reach. If Uncle is in no danger, one can justify Father's action. But, at the slightest danger for Uncle, he must deliver himself to the Authorities.

Is it so after all ?

2ND AUGUST. I shall continue. These " pages from life " will be interesting later on.

The Tche-Ka was informed of Father's whereabouts, so that from that point of view it is all right. I am pleased, because, in my heart of hearts, something was protesting against Father's hiding himself, regardless of my arguments in favour of such a course. However, matters did not run so smoothly

1st—2nd August, 1919

as all that. If this affair had passed through the regular channel we should have had to put up with a great deal of unpleasantness.

Father had some connection with the National Communistic Ministry of Justice, or, rather, with one of its members. The mechanic in our house in Saratoff occupies a high situation in the Ministry. We appealed to him : the handsome hairdresser is his friend and he was able to influence him.

One must be fair to Comrade K., he did all that was in his power, and even more ; he got round Comrade G., and the latter consented to act a farce. It was decided he would come to us, and confirm the fact of Father's "illness." Afterwards the protocol of his search would be placed before the Tche-Ka, and as a first result Uncle would be set at liberty.

Be it said that G., who has taken pity on us, is one of the most feared and cruel detectives of the Tche-Ka.

People say he is an adventurer. The son of an Odessa millionaire. G. has been "on his own" for a long time : he stole money from his father, and has been leading a life of dissipation, playing cards . . . True, this is all hearsay.

He is a tall young man, not stout, but big, with handsome and rather sharp features. Extraordinarily good-looking. A quick, penetrating glance, somewhat crafty. He walked nervously through the room, taking immeasurably big steps and dragging his feet a little.

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On the whole, he was rude, but trying all the time to appear witty.

Z.C., the husband of M.I., recognized him, and after that it became quite amusing. Z.C. questioned him about mutual acquaintances, the other jokingly refused to answer.

“You come from Odessa?”

“What has nationality to do with this?” G. answered, as they usually do out there. Everybody laughed.

He abused his father, calling him a scoundrel, and saying that he would shoot him should he fall into his hands.

“What stories are you telling me? You are the daughter of M—k and have no money? Enough! Let me tell you, that sooner or later your diamonds will fall into my hands. We have to leave Moscow, Petrograd, but the world-wide Revolution will blaze up: the abscess is ripe. Do you understand me?”

For some time he remained alone with Father on purpose.

“Comrade K. was here to-day?”

“He was.”

“What did he say?”

“That he has been doing all he can for my brother, who is innocent.”

He glanced upwards out of his black shining eyes.

“You would do better to look out for yourself.”

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Father was silent. And really, it was difficult to answer acceptably, the subject was so delicate.

"He told you that you would not be arrested?"

"Yes." It was a straight answer to a straight question.

"It is lucky that K. has taken up the cudgels for you. There is no one, except himself, who could have influenced me. . . ."

It is no joke to fall into the hands of such a beast : red terror, the Tche-Ka, shooting . . . he fired off all these gentle threats at us in the first moments when he was trying to impress us.

"But we are relations," Z.C. said to him as he saw him to the door.

"Let's keep as far as we can from bourgeois relatives !" And with boisterous laughter he ran down the stairs. He, a detective, running away from the persecuted bourgeois !

G. is rough, probably even cynical. Not stupid. Perhaps he is even interesting, I mean, diverting. One cannot compare him to Sch-ro and Fregel : the first is refined, the second is more serious and does not introduce the elements of comedy where they are not wanted. Perhaps Fregel is a man with ideas ; I know him too little to express an opinion.

Life has brought me into contact with many Bolsheviks. Alas, not one of them has satisfied my requirements of what a man of ideas and principles should be in my opinion. The majority of those I saw were artisans. The best of them all was

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the Lett from Moscow. Unfortunately he spoke little, but, as far as I know, he is an intellectual man.

3RD AUGUST. I have little free time at my disposal, because these pages of life have pushed out thought and feelings. But they will be interesting later on, and to-day I have more leisure. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to write during the day : shorthand at home, and an hour and a half at the classes keep me fully occupied.

Father's "illness" has developed into a real comedy. He is in the private clinic, where the doctor attends to him with the utmost seriousness : as Mummie says, the doctor can't be expected to know what is going on in his inside.

What will be the next development ? Will he lie there until . . . ? Until when ? They are all saying that the affairs of the Bolshevists are really bad and that this cannot last over a week. It seems as if this time it was going to be true, and if so, we shall surely know in a week. It looks as if the evacuation had already begun. What will happen to every one in general, and to us in particular, after their departure ?

We hear that a new contribution has been levied on the M—k Firm. For this reason Mummie goes to Swiatoschino. It is better to hide : during their political agony the Bolshevists will be particularly fierce.

"Every cloud has a silver lining," Mummie will

2nd-3rd August, 1919

rest in the peace of the forest and there are but few people in Swiatoschino. A change will do her good. The more so as here Mummie is not in her own home, and there, it is quiet and peaceful, just as in a village. One can walk a lot. Yura is going with her, but I am not going on account of my shorthand. I am satisfied with myself : in things that are more or less important I have strength of character : I sacrificed my last summer, I also give up this. Good girl ! Carry on in the same spirit. To-day I heard of a ghastly instance of Bolshevist cruelty, and want to put it down as usual.

There was a well-known Cadet in Kieff (Member of the Constitutional Democratic Party), the lawyer Peresvet-Soltan. He and his son-in-law were seized and shot. The two widows remained, mother and daughter. There was also a son of fourteen years. They took him also. The boy has been in prison for a long time. What have they not been doing to him ! They mocked at him in every way. Perhaps they even beat him. They led him out to be shot, in order to scare him. But the boy was obstinately silent : they wanted to extract information from him as to who came to see them, whether there were meetings at their house, who was present, etc. . . .

Poor, poor boy ! They will ruin that child for life. What will he be when he is grown up ? An embittered, morose, but steady and strong member of the "right."

These outrages upon children by the Bolshevists

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will not be forgiven. The Great Book of Indictment will be compiled from the facts and presented to the judgment of history, not a single case must be forgotten : it is not the Government, as a Government, that is responsible for them in the persons of Lenin, Rakovsky or even lesser men ; but Ivanov, Heifets and other victims will not acquit them in the eyes of the world. It is the despotism, unprincipled and ruthless, of the lower Executive. One cannot impute the direct responsibility to the Bolsheviks, but—alas ! people perish one way or the other by hundreds, by thousands. . . .

Time has passed. Yes, I am tired. I only give a short account of the day of a Petrograd Intellectual.

The husband—a lawyer. The wife—a doctor. A one-year-old baby. Having got up in the morning and drunk coffee—in Petrograd the latter is a fact that deserves notice—the husband goes to his work. S. I. cleans the rooms, prepares something for dinner and takes the baby into the garden until half-past four, when the husband fetches her. They go home. He chops wood and carries it upstairs, they feed the baby, and have their supper about seven. Then they wash the dishes and the baby's clothes, put everything to rights and about one o'clock they are dropping off their feet with fatigue. I should add that this is regardless of the fact that, as far as food goes, they are in a better position than many others, for they still have some provisions.

3rd-9th August, 1919

“Bread has become cheaper in Petrograd : one pound now costs one hundred roubles (£10) whereas formerly it was 170-200.” Our bread costs 32 roubles, the meat 40-50 (£4-£5); butter 180 (£18); cherries, 20-30 roubles (£2-£3).

With this I shall for the moment conclude my notes on life.

9TH AUGUST. “If one loves, let it be with all one’s heart. . . .” Perhaps this could be applied to me. I have taken up stenography and am devoting all my time to it. If I have a moment left I read. The diary has become a luxury. To-morrow is Sunday and like a real schoolgirl I am looking forward to it, for I shall not work but take a walk instead.

To-day I have no lofty subjects to discuss, I shall speak on ordinary topics.

It is a good thing to dream but it is also unhealthy ; dreams develop a morbid state of mind : one soars in a fantastic world, reality disappears, the soul wraps itself in quietness.

I think of many things : about foreign countries, about Moscow, about the Gymnasium such as it would be if conditions were favourable ; about love ; but the dream which seems closest to my heart is the one about the sea ! How I love it, and how beautiful it is. What joy it will be. . . . I shall throw my books aside and roam about ; the waves will sing their lullaby and all the time by day and by night I shall listen to their murmur.

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The Bolsheviks are to go soon. The Gymnasium is going to be done up, which will give us another month. We shall spend September in the Crimea.

. . . What a wonderful time it will be ! But will it come ?

. . . Uncle is still in prison, Father at the clinic. For some time past I have been nursing a little story in my mind ; the adventures of a Paris model-coat, which by degrees deteriorates until it falls into the hands of the Bolsheviks. To-day I wanted to write it, but gave it up.

What is the use ? I ask myself, and it will take so many evenings.

Shall I ever be able to write ? At times it seems to me that the answer is "yes," at others that it is "no." But what happiness it would be !

I have to squeeze myself to get out any thoughts. This is bad. Perhaps my mind is deteriorating ? Heaven forbid. There are days when I have so much to say. But to-day is not one of them. Good night.

12TH AUGUST. Yesterday I again wanted to write but had no time. How good it will be, when, seized by inspiration, I shall spend whole nights over a book or my writing. However, if one reasons, one gains no advantage by it, for the human body demands sleep and alas ! in that case the day is lost, though not always.

I am in a mood to talk a great deal about things

9th-20th August, 1919

"small and great," but it is a little difficult because my thoughts are vague and diffuse.

. . . A peculiarity of my diary : the life that closely surrounds it, rarely pierces through its pages. Nevertheless it very often makes itself felt.

I shall try to-day.

In the distant days of our life in Saratoff when I spoke about Mummie, I represented her to myself as a beloved flower, which demanded constant and special care. Alas, that time has gone for ever.

Things are no longer as they were between Mummie and myself. Though when Mummie says this, I persuade her that she is mistaken : for this hurts her dreadfully. But am I the guilty one? Can I be blamed if I have such a strange nature? The times, the life around me, and many other things, have gone to its formation. Am I responsible for it? It seems to me that I am not. What is my nature? What has changed in me? A kind of hardness is my latest symptom : "woodenness" as Mummie often calls it. I am not pleased about it, but . . .

20TH AUGUST. Oh, my diary. . . . I have been in your debt for several days.

I have been wanting for a whole week to sit down and write because I not only want to say some things, but *must* say them.

I am gathering more and more impressions. As

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long as they are not too far from me, I can surrender to them. I should like to have long hours ahead of me, to be able to express everything that has accumulated in my heart. But when is such a time to come? What I can write to-day will be merely a drop in the ocean. I must make haste.

In the last days, approximately since I have been reading *L'enfant de Volupté*, I feel how intensely my intellect lives, especially in the evenings, when I forget the dry, prosaic, "stenographic" thoughts, I feel that something within me is moving, freely, quickly, bringing contentment to the soul and forcing my brain to work.

It is a pity, a terrible pity that these moments of acute and delightful perception should have been lost to the diary. But I have said more than once that a diary is a luxury which I cannot always afford.

I came home radiant and happy. "Something" sang within me. My soul expanded with happiness. It is still the same. Why? Because of what I am thinking? It is so little and so much. . . . I go to the Students' Union. But that is not the point. We are *en famille* there, for the public is composed of the studying youth of Moscow. The majority are healthy, normal specimens, united in their wish to work. There are different circles. It is a good beginning. We are finding our feet.

Now this is that "something": were there only girls I would not experience the same satisfaction.

20th August, 1919

But there are also many boys. Some are interesting and attractive, indeed the majority are.

And working in common with them has such a good effect on me. The work also is full of interest. We are all together. I cannot call it amusing, but I am full of joy, of a joy such as I have never experienced before.

I await with impatience my next visit to the Union. In the meantime, so far, I have not become intimate friends with any one. I say so far . . . because my heart tells me that this will come.

On Saturday there is an evening party, our "Saturday romp" as we call it at the Union. How much I am looking forward to it. . . . Because I am hoping that I shall be with somebody? But with whom shall I be, or rather who will be with me?

If I were to meet "him" in the usual "social" way I should be no match for him. There, I think, it will be different. It is such a pleasant new feeling. . . . Of what? Can I define it? Just by saying that I hope to be singled out? . . .

When I think of it . . . this feeling is neither without foundation nor is it unreasonable, but I ought to be able to subdue it in the interests of self-discipline. But I am not going to do so because it is so exhilarating! However, could I overcome it? To doubt that I can is weakness! But what would happen afterwards? And what should I get in exchange? The consciousness that my intellect has been victorious? This is

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not worth what I have at present. No, a barren victory. . . .

How many things I should like to say. But the "prose of life" is smothering me. To-morrow it is my turn to go for sugar, and I must get up early. . . .

24TH AUGUST. "They are going." Oh what magic there is in these three words. A world reborn. Can it be that "really" in four or five days, let us even say a week hence, they will be gone and that life will rapturously come into its own? How will this affect our private existence? How much of what we are going to behold will be new, if this takes place?

These are no longer conjectures, but facts: Jitomir and Berditchev have been abandoned: the Bolsheviks are hurriedly evacuating Kieff. The facts speak for themselves this once. Let us see.

Next week—to-day is Sunday—must bring much that is unexpected. It will decide matters. All the indications point to the fact that it will be in our favour.

But to what extent is this decisive for the general situation? What will be the consequences of the Bolsheviks' departure?

The coming of the Poles is decidedly to our detriment: they are a foreign power, and moreover they despise and hate the Russians. What good can come from Poles laying claim to Russian soil?

20th—24th August, 1919

In this respect the arrival of Denikin is better. But how far does he intend to carry into practice such resonant words as “constitutional liberty of conscience, of speech” and all other liberties? However, we can only draw deductions from our personal experiences. He is reported to be a reactionary, a monarchist, a member of the extreme right. If so, this is also bad. But if he will keep his promises, we can wish for nothing better. Let him unite Russia; and let Russia decide upon the form of government that will be most acceptable to her; let her begin to live anew, striding rapidly along the road to progress in order to make up for the past, which was dark, but through no fault of hers.

The people who have been holding their breath all this time will fill their lungs with the new air of freedom, and life will become interesting and active. What a tremendous amount of work lies before us! Life in Moscow! . . . all this is waiting for us in the future.

I have allowed myself to become sentimental. I continue.

From two ills one must choose the lesser. What is the lesser one? Denikin the “Tzar’s General” or—our present masters? Perhaps, personal considerations interfere with my judgment, but I shall try to be impartial.

To what doom are we hastening under the present government? The League of Nations will not alter its tactics, that is, the blockade—the high

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cost of living and the scarcity of goods continue. There is no material security ; on account of this it is impossible to profit by the spiritual side of life.

Thousands of innocent people perish for no reason whatever ; despicable adventurers and blind instruments of governmental power occupy the highest posts. The life of the whole country is nothing but a trembling and unquestioning compliance with the orders of a handful of people. I will not and cannot deny that in the vanguard of the Bolsheviks there are men who hold ideas and beliefs. Alas, they are but few !

What will Denikin give us ? What if he does not keep his promise ? He is a rabid monarchist . . . and if so, what prevents him from proclaiming the Monarchy in the towns which he occupied ? Or is he waiting to conquer the whole of Russia before he makes a bid for the heart of Russia—Moscow ? I do not think he will, but if he did. . . .

Is there another alternative considering the situation that has arisen ? Yes, to bring order into our system of government ; to undertake a peaceful mission of enlightenment, but not according to the chauvinistic methods of the Bolsheviks, to put an end to terrorism ; to conclude peace with the other powers. And all this is only possible "if". . . . And the first "if" consists in this, that there should be more enlightened and conscientious people among those who are "set in

24th-30th August, 1919

authority," the greater as well as the lesser ones. So that at the present moment Denikin is indispensable, as a means of transition. There is a law that can be traced all through history, that after an upheaval there follows a reaction.

But what will happen if foreigners settle on the most profitable strips of Russian territory? Oh, not that! And yet whatever is in store for her, Russia will thrive under them as she never can under her present rulers.

Better if the Poles do not come. . . . My mind is quite made up that I do not want them, but even at this price I cannot forbear from rejoicing at the idea that we shall be delivered from the Bolshevists. It is a dreadful dilemma, but anything is better than Bolshevist tyranny.

I would like to discuss this with somebody who is not a "Bourgeois," but they are openly excited at the coming of the Poles. "The soul perhaps will grieve—but the body will rejoice" is that it? It will be hard to swallow, just like some bitter medicine.

What will happen?

How much there remains unsaid!

30TH AUGUST. The storm has burst. During the last days events have been toppling over each other with bewildering rapidity. At the present moment the lull is probably only temporary. For Kieff—it is the beginning of the end. What will the end be? The administration of the town is

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in the hands of the Duma. It seems that the troops of Petliura have already begun to march into the town. Nothing is known for certain. The day before yesterday Bolshevist newspapers were celebrating their victories, and yesterday the Bolsheviks went.

It is as if everything was renewed. What is coming now? We are waking up after a long nightmare which has lasted for six months. What a number of interesting things there are in front of us. We shall be witnesses of the changes that will take place in the life of the community. If we remain alive, I shall be glad that I passed through this.

I shall put this down as it happened. For some days the atmosphere was tense with nervousness. Momentous events were pending. The reports of victories threw many people into the depths of depression. Others refused to believe. The rumours were varied and contradictory. Yesterday, the strain was particularly oppressive.

In the morning it was said that Petliura was on the Demievka. Towards dinner-time it became a certainty that the last responsible heads of the Bolsheviks—Peters, who made himself so notorious in Petrograd and Latsis, Letts—both of them, had definitely gone.

During the day we saw from our windows the retreating troops, perhaps they were deserters, but we had no exact information, only rumours,

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and the so-called "information from reliable sources."

Since the day before yesterday one could hear distant shooting, but no one paid particular attention to it.

About six I took some books and went into the Botanical Gardens opposite. It was pleasant to sit there. No one near. The sun, which was already sinking in the west, gave out a gentle warmth through the green foliage, caressingly and timidly as in autumn. Here and there red-brown leaves made splotches of colour. The breath of golden autumn lay over everything, and the life of nature continued undisturbed at the time when history was bringing something new to man. . . .

The thunder of guns and the reverberation of their echo came to my ears in a shrill dissonance ; and it was something great that to the boom of the guns of one revolution, I should be reading the history of another that was past. I had Thiers in my hands. The book was living. . . .

Suddenly a roar . . . a whizzing. I fall down . . . probably from the concussion, and remembering from instinct that one must lie prone to save oneself from the shells I try to make myself as small as I can, to gather myself into a ball, and with a faint "Mummie" wait for its bursting over my head and then . . . all will be over. I was on a hillock. Holding my book with one hand, and still waiting for death, I rolled downwards

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. . . I was running away from it! All this took but a few seconds, so that what I was experiencing inwardly did not prevent me from action, quite the reverse. It was my baptism of fire, and because of this I reacted so violently to the whistling of the shell.

When I reached the footpath below, I realized that death—whether it had been impending or not—had spared me. “Home, quicker, quicker!” And I rushed. . . . The whizzing continued. How can one describe this impression? One hears the report of a shot. . . . A moment’s silence . . . then “vjjj-j” or “vzjjjjj,” then the crash of the explosion quite near.

3RD SEPTEMBER (21st August new style). During these last days our life has been so crowded by the current events, that I did not bother about the diary. Now I am less busy and can proceed.

The shooting went on all the evening and part of the night: approximately until 2 a.m. This happened on the night between August 16th and 17th, new style.

At last we went to bed, not really knowing in whose hands the town was, but practically certain that the Bolsheviks were in retreat. We had just succeeded in forgetting the uncanny impression of the bombardment—though to our ears accustomed to the whizzing of shells their noise still seemed to continue—when a terrific hullabaloo woke us up. This time it seemed, and really was, more

30th August—3rd September, 1919

terrifying than in the evening. The shrapnel was bursting near our very windows, as far as we could judge—frightened and half awake as we were.

We rushed downstairs. As soon as we got down, everything became calm. People gradually began to appear in the streets, full of subdued animation ; for the total uncertainty prevented popular feeling from assuming an exuberant form.

“No more Bolshevists”—that is on every one’s lips. But who? Evidently there is no one in authority.

We also turned out. We examined the damage that was nearest to us : and quite enough : twisted tramway rails, nearly opposite to us : a shell on number 17, and another in the next street where a woman was killed. It missed us by the merest chance. It is horrible to me to think that we were so close to death. A little more to the right or to the left. . . . This is what I cannot realize. We went on. The proclamations of Riabtsov, the President of the Duma, asking men to enrol for the defence of the town, are being distributed. At the registry office, where the inscriptions are received, the crowd does not want Jews. Noise and shouting.

The public affirms that the Galician regiments have already passed through some of the streets : outposts of Volunteers.

Until dinner we sat at home, afterwards we went into the town to look at the troops, the crowd, and

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the streets, which had assumed an entirely new aspect.

In the centre animation began to reign about midday with the march of the "liberating armies." For the moment, principally Galicians. The public—it began to block the outlets—all joyous and happy : the soldiers were touchingly welcomed ; with flowers, songs, cries and tears. But all are waiting for the chief event—the entry of Denikin's armies, and look upon the Galicians only as their forerunners.

4TH SEPTEMBER. But the joyful temper gradually merged into heavy foreboding. The air was thick with threats against the Jews ; "Jew ! Jew !" Dreadful !

There was no reliable information with regard to the relations between the Russians and the Ukrainians. As a matter of fact there were yet no Denikin troops in the town, apart from the outposts which had come in the morning.

In the evening a bloody encounter took place near the Duma : the Ukrainian flag was hoisted. The crowd and the Volunteers—at that time the latter had already arrived—protested. The Russian flag was added to the Ukrainian. Some fanatic tore down the Russian flag. There followed promiscuous shooting and a panic broke out ; but after an hour the conflict was over. During the night a few shots were exchanged. Let us

3rd September—4th September, 1919

hope that this has been and will be the last we shall hear of it.

From the evening papers of that day—Sunday the 18th—we learned the truth about the reciprocal attitude of Petliura and General Denikin.

The understanding, about which there were such persistent rumours in Kieff, has never existed. Their ideas are antagonistic : and one stands for the “single and indivisible Russia,” the other for “Independent Ukraine.” The Ukrainians, composed of Galicians and followers of Petliura, entered the town first and did not want to allow the Volunteers to enter. Whether as a result of negotiations or by armed force is not known, but about noon of that day, August 18th, Denikin’s troops entered Kieff, coming from Petchersk. The sympathies of the population were clearly on their side.

There was a great deal of discussion about military zones, the division of command, but after the incident near the Duma, the Ukrainians received the order to disarm, and to evacuate the town at once. Towards morning they complied with this request and now the authority is in the hands of the Volunteers alone.

The Galician armies did not pursue the aims of the Petliura troops, that is to seize the power as Independent Ukrainians ; they went in solely to overthrow the Bolsheviks. Perhaps at the bidding of the Entente ; I do not know, but I think that I am not alone in my ignorance.

The antagonism among the population is extremely

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marked. If it were not for the attitude of the authorities there would surely be a pogrom. As it is there are many cases of assaults in the street on members of the Tche-Ka, who are caught haphazard on mere suspicion.

Many Jewish lads have perished who, during the sway of Petliura in Kieff, belonged to the militia. What would have happened to them had his troops remained in the town? . . . Every day the papers publish long lists of Jewish names, Yaschas, Monias, Yanoussiass, who have "tragically perished." The flower of their youth enrolled itself in our defence and died for us. . . .

Eternal memory to these boy heroes. . . .

. . . The Bolsheviks have left a terrible heritage : no, it is not a heritage : of all the manifestations during the period of Bolshevism in our midst there is only one which has affected all the classes of the population, one which has made itself felt and whose after-effects will last for a long time. And that is the Tche-Ka.

The mind cannot conceive that in one and the same town, while society was trying to enjoy itself and to stifle its cares in theatres and cinemas ; while life ran its perturbed but dreary course, people were perishing in the thousands, behind the walls of the Tche-Ka. "Counter-revolutionaries," "bourgeois," magistrates, intellectuals, all those, who in some way had failed to please the "authorities," found themselves in the Sadovaya

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. . . in the Elisavetskaya,¹ or any one of the other departments of the Extraordinary Commission.

What took place there? This will remain a mystery even for us, fellow-citizens of the unfortunate victims, whose remains cry aloud for vengeance.

. . . . Small cells. Window-sills deeply scarred with inscriptions, names, prayers of those who have perished. Congealed blood. . . . Next door, luxurious apartments fitted out with requisitioned furniture . . . empty champagne bottles.

It is some inhuman thirst for blood and destruction. Some thing abnormal. Is this sadism? But surely all the members of the Tche-Ka could not be sadists?

A peculiar horror is attached to No. 5 Sadovaya. A small courtyard. A shed with cemented floor. In the middle a drain for the blood. Everything is saturated with it. Brains are spattered about: on the last days they were being shot through the head. . . .

The cellar, to which the public is not admitted, is said to be full of corpses. They were dug out of the garden where countless bodies of those who had been done to death were lying. Some of them, to judge by the marks, were buried half alive . . . others had strips cut out of them, others were mutilated. Probably the public exaggerate, I simply cannot believe in torture. But

¹ Names of streets.

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it's enough to think of the number of those who *perished innocent*. . . .

Mothers and wives, brothers and sisters, are seeking among the remains for their relations. People are imploring in the papers for information about the fate of those arrested by the Tche-Ka and since missing. . . . Every day requiems are being held. . . .

For what reason did they suffer? How could this take place so close and yet so far from us? A dank curtain of blood. . . . Tens of thousands will arise at the coming of the great Tribunal of Time.

The whole day long the crowds were stationary near these remains—only remains of the nightmare that we have lived through.

In the darkness of the Sadovaya and Elisavetinskaya, in cemeteries, in churches, tears are flowing, and the pictures of deep personal grief darken all the rest. . . . In the meantime life does not wait but rushes onwards, bringing us something new every day.

This duality always appears in me and I am always conscious of it. . . .

. . . On the Fronts the Volunteer Army is victorious. Admiral Koltshak, "the supreme ruler of Russia," has begun to move. Is it the tone of the papers? The impetus given by local life? Or is it actually so? Perhaps all these reasons combined, but the impression is created that the gloom is lifting. We have arrived at the final

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stage. The victorious Volunteer Army will reach the "heart of Communism," Moscow, and that will be the end of Bolshevism.

The life of the people in the places occupied by Denikin resembles springtime : full of radiance and vigour.

They say that in Charkov the life is that of 1914, that is—a normal development of social intercourse. This is quite comprehensible : society wants to make up for its long subjection.

The prices in Kieff are now beyond competition : Moscow, as it was last year, is a paradise compared to the present. Bread 110 roubles (£11) a pound—black bread, and one cannot obtain it these days. Meat 180 roubles (£18), lard 300 roubles (£30), butter 400 roubles (£40), cucumbers 50-53 roubles a dozen, apples from 12 roubles to 35 roubles apiece, cream cheese 170 roubles.

Thoughts run quicker than the pen. . . . I wanted to say so much more to-day. And I cannot get it all in : as I write, new thoughts are ever coming to me.

I should write all night if it were not for sleep . . . and Mummie. . . .

I ought to try and write again in the day-time . . . but I must also do other things. Good night.

There are days when you long for something bigger than the grey life that environs you. Something like spun moonshine, something that is blue and mystic, and hails from that azure world that

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is so far from the real one. It is the longing for beauty, for poetry. . . .

I do not know what it is that I want. . . . Something. . . . I am sad. . . . Fading autumn is in my soul . . . my heart is desolate. The memories of the past. They overpower me so strongly when I am in Sasha's house or with Uncle Volodya. An inarticulate, boundless sadness. And I am not so very far, after all, from the moment when beauty will come into my life.

What is one to do on such days? One can write, read. But neither Thiers, nor Tchekov satisfy me. I want something to carry me away, to hold my attention. It is the only thing that more or less corresponds to my mood. . . . I could deaden it by returning to sober reality, but don't want to do this. . . .

What will happen in the winter? For the present we shall move to Sasha's apartment. Perhaps Uncle Volodya will soon arrive with his family.

I should enjoy some good music—but there is none, what a tremendous spiritual force one finds in it. . . . Formerly I did not understand this.

On such days I could become a drunkard, perhaps rather a morphiomaniac, or use cocaine, or something of the sort. . . . To intoxicate, to forget myself. If I could only be near the sea and find repose in its contemplation, that would be enough. . . .

If I write I shall forget. If I read it means to

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give in. Weakness is contrary to my programme, but I shall give in all the same. . . . Just once—for the last time. . . .

Writing quietens and sobers me more than anything else.

14TH SEPTEMBER. Six days. It sounds like eternity. Everything appears so distant and so long ago. Our life with M. I., and yesterday's examination in shorthand, and this morning. . . .

"Some are gone, others are far away." Far, oh how far! Sasha is in Paris! He went there from Constantinople. . . . The family of Uncle Volodya lives happily in the Crimea. There they have sun and sea, sky and mountains. . . . Beauty in their lives. Light and freedom. They have the consciousness of personal liberty and they are assured of the coming day.

In distant Paris that consciousness is still far stronger. There people live. . . . How? I hear that we used to live thus before the war, when the times were "normal." I do not know how that was. . . . I do not remember. Only it was full, rich. . . .

And at the very moment when I sit with my diary and the sad tears splash on my copy book, there, in Paris, life is one glowing riot of colour and sound.

Does such a place really exist? My stupid imagination runs away with me and, as if to tease me, shows me all this so vividly.

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But that life in Paris is the one in which Sasha and Ira find such delight ! And to think that they *were* here as we still are.

It seems ages ago . . . and yet recently, only half a year—in a half dark and nearly empty drawing-room, I was bidding good-bye to them ; they were taking their departure, fleeing from Russia. Sasha, worn out by the fatigue and the excitement of the day, uncertain as to whether he would get an extra railway ticket, was lying on the couch. Ira sat next to him in an arm-chair. . . . “ Au revoir. . . . Keep worrying your Mother. Make her hurry. You must not remain here. . . . ” Thus Ira, kissing me. . . .

And now. Here we are, dragging a grey purposeless, materialistic existence, and there they are in Paris, which seemed so far away that it belonged to another world. Therefore it *is* attainable. . . . Why cannot we reach it ?

You wished to taste an exotic fruit. You saw it in your imagination, you inhaled its fine, penetrating scent, you seemed to feel its flavour. Oh ! how you wanted it. But the days went by ; and life, which never stops, sucked you in. The desire lost its edge. And suddenly on a tree so high that you cannot possibly reach it, you see this fruit. What is the former torment in comparison with the present one, when it seems to you that the fruit is within your grasp, yet is just beyond it . . . ?

Such is the longing that gnaws at my heart, since I have heard that Sasha is there. Autumn mists

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are wrapped around it and I feel something that is akin to apathy. And all day long I am pursued by that one thought: "Whilst we are here, they . . ." Whatever I do it gives me no rest.

"Some are gone and others far away. . . .
Inclement autumn, solitary autumn. . . ."

. . . And the discussions about the necessity of a prompt departure go on everlastingly. . . .
The mocking elves whisper to me continuously about it.

15TH SEPTEMBER. Horrible. A nightmare yet humorous. All day long, on all sides you only hear about the price of bread, and what potatoes cost; how much cheaper the cucumbers, the tomatoes and the rest of the vegetables have become.

And I also catch myself at it, for these household trifles absorb a great part of one's "ego." You become "materialized". . . . Yes, yes it is so—but in our situation this is inevitable. It is bitter, yet funny. And a little irritating.

Oh Paris, Paris, you are not for such as we. . . . I must forget it. Not think about it. Yesterday I fretted until the very evening. . . .

Yes, if one keeps thinking about it, it hurts and you feel bitter, because you want it so much.

Mummie believes that we shall not be here this winter. There is one remedy—and that is to stop thinking. As soon as one begins, no reason-

Kieff-Paris

ing in the world is of any avail. "There is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

Many now look upon me as a good little house-keeper and *c'est tout*.

Good gracious! If that were so? No, rubbish. All that is idealistic is still alive in me, but it is hidden very far away.

Not to think, not to think . . . to forget!

Perhaps soon the Gymnasium will begin. I am glad. (After an hour's interruption.) It doesn't matter, people live also in Kieff. Only not to think about *that* life.

17TH SEPTEMBER. How much deep and strong beauty there is in life. . . . I sat during the interval, leaning against the wall. . . . So wonderful. . . . One is carried far away from the world of prose and commonplace.

It was at the cinema. Oh! why could I not note my impressions at once after the end?

It seemed to me as if my heart were ready to burst, so many feelings and thoughts had been awakened by these sensations.

Entranced for two hours, I sat in quite a different world. So infinitely distant from ours, even distant from life. And especially from the present one. It seemed strange that one could thus lose oneself.

It is hard to write, when against one's will one is feeling sleepy. In this, as in many other things man is the slave of his nature.

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What is love? There is no answer; no knowledge, except experience. Will it come, will it not come? Is it really so big that it absorbs all one's faculties? So immense and radiant?

Shall I know or will it pass me by?

And I think only about one thing. Will he love me? Foolish, ridiculous. . . . I don't even know them, only Mummie does. . . . Can it really . . .? But I shall meet him, meet him surely. If I study and live in Moscow, I simply must.

It is not on his account that I want to live there. But he adds something to my dreams. Something bright. . . .

Our ages tally, and beyond that, who can tell? Oh! I so much want to love. . . .

My dearest. . . . He is so fine, and so sensitive and so clever—the traits of my ideal in a man.

If he suddenly came to Kieff! Wonderful!

In the drama to-day there was something from this fantastic future. Oh! If . . . But I believe that our roads of life will meet. With his family. With them. . . .

I have no family—I have only Mummie! . . .

Oh, future! Come more quickly. . . .

I could write about more positive subjects, but I must go to bed. It is late. If only pleasant dreams came to me. How I love them. . . .

20TH SEPTEMBER. There are sometimes days,

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when, if I had vodka, I would be capable, I suppose, of getting drunk on it. . . .

I shall not write to-day because I want to get away from myself. . . .

11TH OCTOBER. And so . . . to-day is the day I have been awaiting during six long months. How much agitation and how many tears ! How much that is dark and gloomy have I lived through in this time, an ineradicable seal set on all one's life. Is all this really left behind ? I cannot believe it. Somehow I cannot conceive that the nightmare of the Bolsheviks, of the pogroms, lies in the past. True, there is still much ahead : the journey, going aboard ship, but it seems as if we shall overcome these obstacles. And, if one excludes railway accidents and armed attacks, what importance have the hardships of the journey after all we have experienced here ? Can we really be . . . in Paris in a month or so ? And a week later at the seaside ? The dream has begun to materialize. Now, it sounds more probable than in those distant days when I sat with M. I. and wrote about all this in my diary.

The sea . . . the sea . . .

With the New Year, the new life will begin. . . . So this is possible ? Does life still hold lovely fairy tales ?

From this day, in one way or another, we shall see this fairy tale unfolding. Perhaps slowly, but, anyway, it has begun. There is not much

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longer to wait. And as we come closer and closer to the final consummation, time will pass unnoticed. . . .

We cannot complain, travelling is comparatively comfortable ; we have the two lower seats and there are five of us.¹ It isn't bad, but very stuffy. The public so-so. . . . Mostly officers. Few "intellectuals," if any, and these very rude. Women and children, mostly officers' families.

We arrived early at the station, and, thanks to Father's *savoir faire*, got our seats without special trouble. Let us see how we shall get on during the night and to-morrow.

Nobody knows how we shall travel after Charkov : it seems that there is no route to Constantinople.

12TH OCTOBER. Sitting in the train, one could write a great deal to the rattling of the wheels and with the ever-changing landscape before one's eyes. But there is room only at the table, and the "children" are sitting there. A pity ! I shall make up for it when we stop at Charkov and other towns. . . .

The night was almost a nightmare : there were three of us on the lower seat ; we were all the time trying to invent more comfortable attitudes. Mummie suffered particularly. If it had not been for that it would have been quite bearable.

We seem to stand a long time in this station.

¹ Russian railway carriages are like the International sleepers.

Kieff—Paris

This is a pity. We shall probably not reach Charkov until the evening. How shall we manage? By what route shall we travel? When shall we get to France? Is this really possible? And shall we really be in Yalta¹ in a few days, where we shall see everybody? It is strange: at one and the same time, life is so different over the surface of the globe: Yalta, Paris, Kieff, Moscow, the war. It seems so remarkable to me.

13TH OCTOBER. We arrived at Charkov at 2 a.m. There is absolutely nowhere to lay one's head. These are no empty words, but a deplorable fact. People are literally sleeping one on top of the other, huddled on the railway platforms, squatting in the waiting-rooms, lying on the stairs, in the corridors, even in the room of the telegraph operator.

14TH OCTOBER. To-day we are still in Charkov. We sat up at the station until the morning. Little Tamara slept on Shura's knees and the latter sat on the suit-cases in the luggage-room. The others sat on the luggage on the platform. In the morning, about seven, having left our belongings in the cloak-room, we drove to the P., the childhood friends of all the family.

The first impression of Charkov, especially on a grey autumn day, is unfavourable. It is that of

¹ Town in the Crimea.

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something large and straggling, like a flattened pancake, and reminds one of Saratoff, provincial, though it is important. The houses are small, the pavement is bad. This is the first impression of the old part of the town. The new part, which is mostly composed of private houses, mansions and shops, is far better. The principal street—Sum-skaya—stretches to the suburban park, which is the pride and glory of Charkov. One of the streets is called the “Black-Eyed” ! The small stream, Sula, is a pool, which the chickens ford, undismayed. The town boasts branches of the biggest firms in Russia, for it plays a great rôle with regard to trade. But so far, its appearance does not correspond to its importance.

Life here is cheaper than in Kieff, and the nearer we get to the South, the more noticeable the difference will become.

We arrive at the P., a low, two-storied house. Separate doors lead to each of the floors. The small but charming flat is separated from the street by a thin wooden partition which, perhaps erroneously, is my conception of a door. It has a special atmosphere. Cultured, comfortable, clean. The proportions are diminutive, and this further increases, if it does not actually create, the charm of the apartment. The miniature hall leads into the study-drawing-room. Antique furniture of red wood, a roll-top desk ; a capacious cupboard. On the walls two small bookcases : a row of open shelves. No novels, but many scientific books

Kieff—Paris

and others about art. Also a number of beautiful, delicate mezzotints and miniatures hang on the white walls. On the floor, a carpet in reddish-blue tones. Luminous, engaging. The door opens, and, gliding soundlessly on the carpet, a charming, little white creature with a blue bow makes her appearance. It is the four-year-old Irotchka, the daughter of our hosts, the P.

Her father is a short man, stoutish, always ready with an affable joke. He is *persona grata* with theatrical managers, artists and such-like : when the actors of the Artistic Theatre came here they regarded his house as their own. Refugees arrive, emigrants, acquaintances from Kieff who go to Rostoff, they all stay with P.

In the narrow dining-room, not much wider than a sideboard, there rarely sit down less than five or six people to a meal, whereas the family only consists of three—he, she, and the baby.

The hotels are overcrowded. P. has found room for us in a nursing-home with friends.

It is not difficult to obtain a ticket : one must only get into the queue at 1 or 2 a.m. I could quite easily have done this, but Mummie, of course, hired a messenger. To-morrow we move on.

Oh, how I am going to travel in two or three years ! . . . Much unpleasantness was caused during the journey here by some disagreeable youths, overbearing young officers. One of them, a fat lieutenant, very much pleased with himself, without a ticket, but in possession of a fat sturgeon

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and some caviar. Probably he spits at money, and perhaps also at honesty. . . .

Why hasn't Mummie returned? It is time! What if an accident had happened to her? I should go away. Alone. I would live otherwise. . . . I should have to go abroad. . . . Dreadful! But I know that this is nonsense.

Oh, how beautiful it will be at the seaside. I shall get up early of a morning; and then sail on a ship to the distant magic shores. What shall I find there? Only an everyday existence after all?—no, I cannot believe this. . . .

I am writing, reading Block, waiting for Mummie. Why does she stay away so long? . . . Here she is, now everything is right.

In a week, in a week!

When I think of going abroad, I feel my body tingling with life. Abroad . . . the sea. . . .

15TH OCTOBER. It was dreadful getting into the train. During our fugitive existence I have never seen anything like it. The window-panes were smashed in, people climbed in through them, luggage disappeared, and the crowd pushed and shoved in an incredible manner. G. E. accompanied us and helped us to settle down. He climbed in through the window, the little girl was handed to him, the porters came dragging the luggage along: soldiers tried to force their way through the windows. Our two big bags were still on the platform, and so were we all! Mum-

Kieff-Paris

mie was fidgeting about, despairing of success.

“Young master,” shouted the porter. Yura was also handed through the window. He dives in head foremost; at last the officials arrive. The crowd is dispersed, and we take possession of our seats.

The result is much happier than our journey from Kieff: we have electric light and plenty of room. If only we could reach Rostoff by daylight.

We are ever nearer to thee, blessed South! Receive us who are thirsting for the Sun and Warmth!

To-morrow we shall be in Rostoff. . . .

Oh! New life! If only it does not deceive our hopes and expectations. Every hour brings us nearer to the coveted aim. . . .

“Tuk-tuk-tuk,” go the carriage wheels.

Until to-morrow.

16TH OCTOBER. The sun is shining. We are in the South. I look out of the window on the distant steppe, and my soul knows freedom. We are so near to our object.

How wonderful is the steppe! Its breadth, its liberty! Are there such places in the world outside Russia?

I would like to write, but it is painfully uncomfortable.

17TH OCTOBER. I am desperately tired, and

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would so much like to write. I have many thoughts.
. . . They are not gay. . . .

18TH OCTOBER. Yesterday evening I could have written a great deal, but I was too tired. What a *genre*! In the evenings I do not feel my feet. But first, the outside events. . . .

We arrived safely in Rostoff, and took up our quarters in almshouses belonging to the sect of "Old Believers." The little old inmates are practical souls. Yesterday one of them came to see us. She chatted for half an hour and ended by asking us for some money. The housekeeper is ready to oblige for a consideration, and without it—not a step. To-morrow we take ship to Yalta. Soon, soon, the sun, the sea. . . . Oh Lord, when shall I breathe the sea air?

The first half of our journey is completed. Now that it is, when we get to Yalta, there will remain the journey abroad. If only Mummie does not linger there too long.

With each passing day life proves to me that the contents of books are taken from life itself. It is enough to look closer, and in each family you will see its drama, I mean the purely individual happiness or misfortune, which singles it out from the others. There is no uniform mass, but there are separate little worlds, each of them full of its own happenings.

19TH OCTOBER. We are leaving to-morrow,

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though we learned this morning that Machno is reported to be marching on the Crimea. Probably this is but a panic. Perhaps it is the truth, but premature. But Mummie has decided to go. *Advienne que pourra.*

If we could live quietly for a little while ! I hope that the Machno rumour will turn out to be a myth.

To-day I have realized, or at least found, a new name for that new feeling that makes one pleasantly aware that people are beginning to notice the woman in me. It gives one such a light, happy sensation.

In the morning we went to the office of R.'s husband. I love him ; he is kind. After dinner, towards evening, we went to them. Mummie and Yura live there. I live with his relations, who have a son of fifteen-sixteen. Raya and I were going out, and we all came out together, and W. M., also Turik ; the boy walked with me and we began to chat. This does not mean that he felt anything in particular, just the woman in me.

W. M. and I have mutual sympathies. We talked and took leave of each other with great heartiness. That is what is so pleasant. In general, the expression of love coming from others is agreeable, but here there was a difference. Fie ! it looks ugly put like that. It was just that, that they are men and we are women.

Love, *what* are you ? When shall I know ?

I so want to write, and the old fogies are chasing me to bed,

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20TH OCTOBER. We are going. So far, only along the Don. With an intake of breath I think of the quick realization of my long-cherished dream to behold the sea.

I did not expect to catch sight of it for the first time from a ship, but it will not be so very disappointing. A few days more.

21ST OCTOBER. To-day I want to write a long time : to pay the debt of the last days.

Rostoff is much more attractive than Charkov. Brighter and more hospitable. The streets are wide and planted with trees. At the present time the principal street, the Sadovaya, connects it with Nahitchewan. Between the two towns there is also a tramway line. The number of cinemas is remarkable, and they have a special designation—they are called "illusions," as in Odessa.

All the streets are not so nice, but the central part of the town, which is on the direct route of the travellers, makes a very good impression.

At the time, Rostoff is one of the principal centres of "liberated Russia," and great animation reigns there. There are a large number of military people and "capitalists" from other towns which are occupied by the Reds.

In comparison with Kieff, the prices are low, but the inhabitants complain of the dearness ; as they had the Bolsheviks only a month and a half out of two years, they are used to nearly normal prices.

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Meat, for instance, only costs 3 roubles (6s.), but thanks to the colossal overcrowding of the public, it has risen to 18 roubles. The same thing applies to other products.

The ship left at one p.m. In the beginning, the right bank of the river, on which stands Rostoff, was hilly, but after one of the numerous curves of the river, the low range of mountains merged in the north into the depths of the country—I cannot find a better expression—and on both sides, the New Russia steppe, covered with yellowish-green autumn grass, unrolled itself.

Flocks of beautiful sea-gulls made splotches of white colour. They flew in batches after the boat, catching in their beaks, with shrill cries, the bread that was thrown to them. They either kept immobile in the air or hovered to and fro, flapping their large grey wings, giving one the impression that they were all made out of one piece, so uniformly did they move them up and down. It is a beautiful picture, and they reminded me at moments of sculptured birds, thanks to that rhythmic motion. The very name of sea-gull is poetic, or rather, man saw how lovely they were and invented the name for them. . . .

ARRIVAL IN PARIS

Night. The train runs swiftly. Sleeping villages flash by, silent railway stations. In the carriage it is quiet; accustomed to discomfort,

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the passengers sleep huddled on the narrow benches. A night-lamp feebly illumines the corridor. The wind rushes in through the open window.

I eagerly breathe in the fresh air, trying to pierce with my glance the darkness of the night. There, somewhere on the horizon, spreads the huge town, object of my dreams and longings for so many weary months. Paris! . . . In this word lies peace, a new, full life of which we were deprived so long. . . . What will it be? What message holds this strange town, this strange country? And the train hurries onwards, punctuating the night with shrill whistles. . . . And so, this is the end of a past? Everything lies behind us, in our memories. The dawn of something new and beautiful is breaking on the horizon. . . .

Lights glimmer—set closer and closer together. . . . We are approaching . . .

“*Nous arrivons bientôt, Mademoiselle!*” I return to earth. An old English lady has come up to me; her passport was viséd with ours at the frontier.

“I don’t know, I am here for the first time.” One word follows another and we begin to talk. “What shall I do in Paris? . . . Study, then go to England. . . .” She speaks with warmth and sincerity. She is sorry for us Russians and expresses the wish that we should meet with a friendly welcome in England. “*Nous vous aimons, nous vous aimons,*” Miss repeats. And there seems to me something significant in these

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sincere wishes of happiness on the threshold of the new life. . . . The train slackens its speed. . . . Gare de Lyon. . . . The usual bustling and noise. At last the luggage is examined, handed over ; we are free to go.

We come out into the street. The pale disc of the moon is nearing the horizon. The town is enveloped in the blue mist that precedes dawn. . . . The day is breaking. The sun, bright and triumphant, will shine upon our entrance into this new and unknown life, which called to me and lured me from afar. . . .

